TV World

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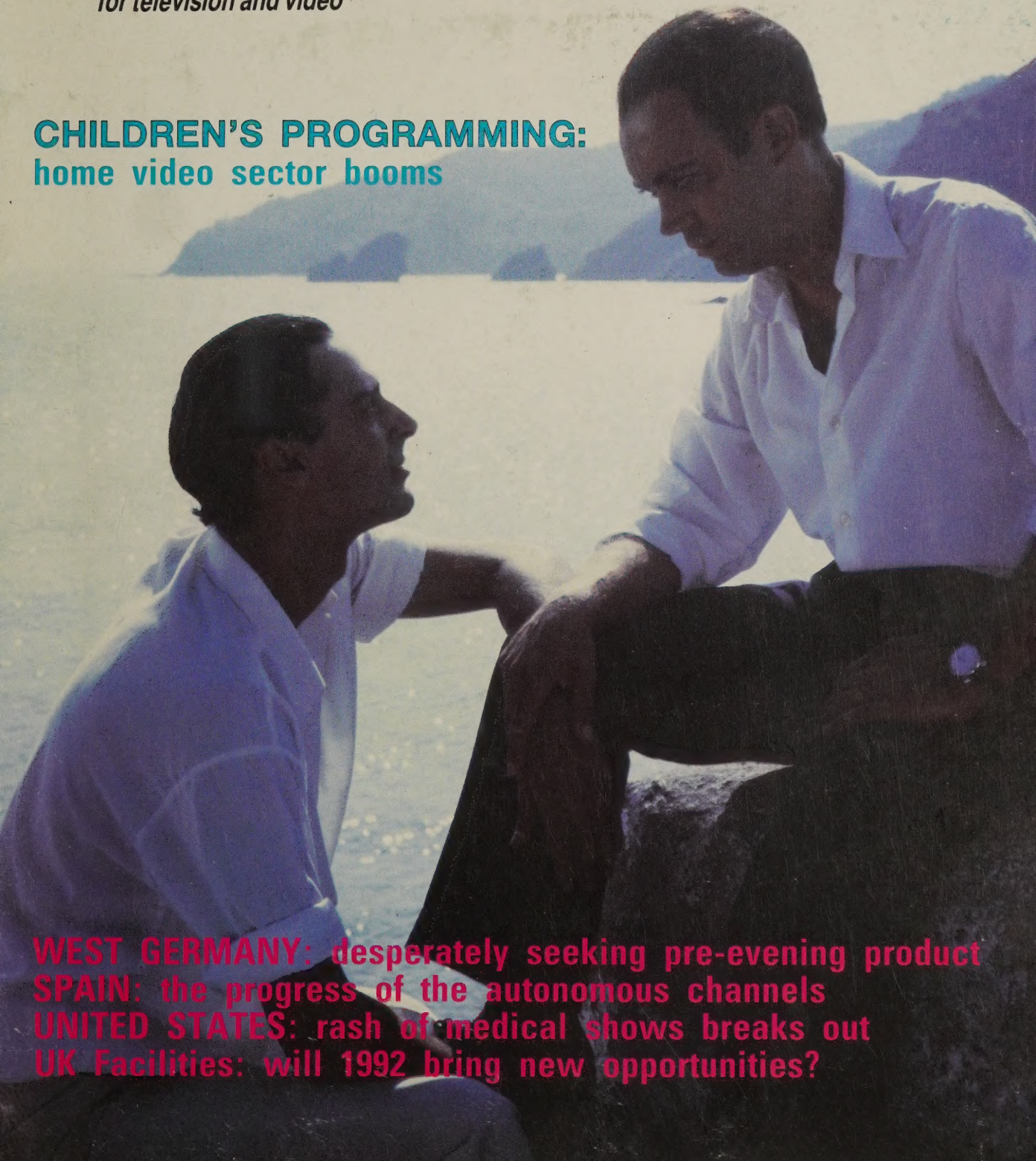

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Neutral new bill

TORONTO: Canada's federal government has introduced its new broadcasting legislation, after years-long debate, reports and hearings. The bill is reportedly "technologically neutral," which means that broadcasting in Canada is no longer defined as strictly "over-the-air" broadcasting; broadcasting is defined by content, not by reception methods.

The new bill contains extensive proposals for both the private and public sector, including:

— an additional $130 million (US$108.3 million) for CBC over four years, to reach 95 per cent Canadian content;

— legislated protection for "journalistic, creative and programming independence" of the CBC, for the first time;

— considerably strengthened powers for the federal broadcast regulator, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), including the start of an incentives programme for private broadcasters, a performance incentive as part of broadcast licence fees based on revenues and on performance;

— making the Commission subject to policy direction from Cabinet, but not on individual cases, and Cabinet review of decisions will be maintained but limited;

— a new Alternative Programming Service, to be started within two years, to reflect Canada's multicultural nature, in English. The new service would be complemented by increased support for TV5 scheduled to start in September this year in French;

— recognition of different conditions and requirements for French and English broadcasting in Canada;

— an increase in funding to Telefilm Canada, which along with previous increases announced this spring, total $75.9 million (US$63.25 million) over four years;

— allowing cable operators and other distributors to originate programming, subject to CRTC regulation.

The new act, tabled in the house mid-June is not certain to pass this session, with rumours starting of a fall election.

THE Editor's LETTER

With the US writers' strike seemingly set to go on, despite appeals by the writer-producer-director fraternity to call it a day, we may be about to witness an industry shift which might otherwise have taken years to happen.

Some of the likely results are going to be a delay in the start of the fall season; the use of non-union writers; the resussitation of shelved scripts; proliferation of game and current affairs shows which are not affected by the dispute; a change in power balance as independents which have agreed terms outside the strike consolidate their position while the traditional suppliers grind to a halt; and most worrying to the networks, long-term loss of audience as viewers go elsewhere for their daily TV dose.

But one less obvious outcome might be that the networks may just decide to give UK/Canadian/Australian product a chance, or at least may decide that formats might be bought and adapted — and there are signs that alterations are becoming less drastic than previously; Dear John, a new NBC show, was a BBC format acquired from the scriptwriter John Sullivon, and, by all accounts, changed very little. But non-US writers will not actually be able to supply scripts as the writers' guilds around the world have agreements to support each other's actions.

We can, however, expect writers to start crossing frontiers to seek work. There is nothing to stop, for example, US writers from coming to Europe and working for a producer who believes an American script would help a US sale; this is already happening in Italy. Also several top UK writers have set up shop in Hollywood.

In the meantime, MIPCOM looks increasingly likely to be a bit bald in terms of new US product and channels worldwide may have to look elsewhere than to the US for their primetime shows, at least temporarily.

Alison Homewood

60 per cent up at BBC Ents

LONDON: BBC Enterprises has announced a 60 per cent rise in profits this year despite the disadvantageous strength of sterling in the foreign exchange. Programme sales were particularly successful in the Far East; and BBC Enterprises has commissioned a co-production deal with TV Networks in Japan and Australia for *The Midas Touch*, a venture which will be made out of house. Emphasis of policy this year has been upon specification in the marketing of programmes abroad and upon the potential of co-production ventures, and in order to enact this policy peripheral activities have been contracted out. BBC Books, who produced the year's best selling fiction paperback this year, *Yes, Prime Minister, Vol 2*, have contracted out distribution. The acquisition of Redwood Publising House will enable BBC Enterprises to publish its magazines outhouse, and also to use Redwood Publishing as a launch pad for new ventures.

Night time downloading has been inaugurated with *British Medical Television*, and possible future ventures include specialist programmes for farmers and vets. The potential in the service has been recognised by the Home Office who have actively encouraged the customer service (Downloading is an inscription service involving the broadcasting of programmes to remotely activated video recorders during the dark hours of BBC-TV transmission).

The possibility of launching computerised editorial operations over satellite is one new aspect of the market prospects of Satellite which BBC Enterprises have capitalised upon. The opening market prospects and the continued growth of television are such that James Arnold Baker, Chief Executive of BBC Enterprises could announce, "the amalgamation into a single company of all the BBC's commercial activities has really taken off".

People

Former director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA) Dr Steven Moyo has been appointed the first director general of the new-look **Zambia National Broadcasting** Services which began on April 1. Until now, the radio and TV network was a department under the ministry of information.

Sky Television has appointed John O'Loan as Head of News for the Sky News channel to be launched on the Astra satellite at the beginning of 1989.

O'Loan joins Sky after 15 years of service with Network Ten in Australia, where he was Director of News. His experience includes the setting-up of news bureaux across the world, the establishment of Australia's links with international satellite delivered news services, and the development of Australia's national satellite news distribution systems.

John Willis is to join **Channel 4** as Controller of Factual Programmes. He was previously Controller of Documentaries and Current Affairs at Yorkshire TV. The new post results from chief executive Michael Grade's reorganisation of C4.

Roy Gibbs has left the **BBC** to become Head of Sales at Yorkshire TV's newly formed programme sales company **Yorkshire Television International.** He was Head of Co-productions for the BBC drama unit.

Richard Dunn, MD and Chief Executive of **Thames TV** has accepted the **ITV Council's** invitation to become its Chairman. The ITV Council is comprised of the Managing Directors of the ITV companies determine joint policy on a number of industry matters.

Fuji shuffle

TOKYO: Fuji TV, Japan's most popular commercial channel, is undergoing a drastic executive shuffle following the death at 42 years of age of Haruo Paul Shikanai, CEO of the parent company of Fuji TV, and son of the channel's founder Nobutaka Shikanai.

The latter has come out of retirement and taken over the top position, and his son-in-law Hiroaki Shikanai has been appointed deputy executive chairman. The president of Fuji television network Shigeaki Hazama has been made president of sister company Nipponhoso Broadcasting, Japan's largest commercial radio system. Succeeding him is Hisashi Hieda, formerly managing director of Fuji TV.

Fuji gained its position at the top of the tree by going after a young audience, and by establishing itself as a major feature film producer in Japan. This reshuffle seems to reinforce this direction.

Hong Kong heats up for cable tender

HONG KONG: Competition is hotting up between the rival would-be operators of Hong Kong's cable TV system, for which tenders are expected to be called in September.

Only one franchise will be awarded, and the main contenders are Cable Television Hong Kong (CTHK) which is backed by British-controlled consortium, or Hutchinson Cablevision, representing local tycoon Li Kashing's Hutchinson group. Six other groups are interested, but would seem to be unlikely to beat the two giants.

Both groups are planning (US$320 million) to invest around HK$2.5 billion in building the system, programme production and acquisition and operating the service over a five-year term. An estimated HK$30 million (US$318 million) has already been spent in market research and publicity drive; one similar finding is that, because 98 per cent of the population is Chinese, programmes will generally be in Cantonese.

One of the major differences between the bids is the choice of system carrier. CTHK has the Hong Kong Telephone company on its side, and this would mean it could use the fibre optic network already in place, while HCV is arguing that that it is not a good idea, because a conflict of interests might occur.

French or fines?

PARIS: La Cinq and M6 have been told by the French high court State Council to adhere to the programme quotas set down by the French TV ruling body CNCL, or risk paying large fines.

Both channels air a considerable amount of US product; from April 1987-March 1988, the La Cinq schedule consisted of 65.8 per cent American produced shows against 24.5 per cent French-originated material (the balance came from Europe, mainly Italy). M6 averaged around the same ratios, whereas the law demands that the nets transmit 50 and 60 per cent respectively of French-produced material.

The networks have been given until December to get their houses in order or face paying a fine of FFr10,000 (US$1,600) for each hour under quota, rising to FFr30,000 (US$4,800) an hour by March 1989 if they are still disobeying the order.

● The CLT-owned network M6 is improving its audimat rating so substantially that it now beats Canal Plus in its unscrambled period, and is creeping up on public broadcaster FR3, despite the fact that the latter has a 90 per cent penetration and M6 can only be received in just over 40 per cent of the country. It has not yet pulled itself into the black however; in 1987, it lost around $50 million.

Canada in brief

A NEW coalition has been formed in the Canadian satellite industry to try to halt the spread of illegal pirate decorders which receive programming from American satellites. PROGRESS — Partners for Responsible Options and Growth in Entertainment Services Via Satellite — was formed in June by the pay TV programmer First Choice, the Videocipher Division of General Instrument, satellite equipment manufacturers and Telesat Canada, the Canadian domestic satellite carrier.

Satellite television is hotting up in Canada, with the plans for First Choice and its western Canada counterpart Superchannel to enter the direct-to-home market.

CANADA'S regulatory agency, the CRTC, has changed its points rating system determining Canadian production and content, for frame-by-frame animated productions. Previously, animation was handled the same as live action where six points are required out of a possible list of two points each for a Canadian director or writer, one point each for Canadian first and second leads, head of art department, director of photography, music composer and editor, with mandatory Canadian director or writer and one of two leads.

The new animation regulations require six points of the following: one point each for director, scriptwriter and storyboard supervisor, design supervisor, layout and background location, key animation, assistant animation inbetweening, camera operator, music composer and editor.

BUSINESS television may be the next frontier in television broadcasting, according to a recent Toronto satellite symposium. Business television will be a $5 (US$4.1 billion) billion a year industry by 1995, prognosticators predict, and with 40 private satellite networks now in operation in the US, that number is expected to rise to 500 by the 1990s.

In brief . . .

LONDON: The large independent production company TVF has won the new tender for WH Smith Television's Lifestyle contract. George Black, Director of Programmes for WH Smith said: "We're delighted with the quality of the programming we've received from TVF, and the tender was about quality and price. Their submission convinced us that they're giving us good value for money as well as high quality programmes."

SUVA: A pacific news service, Pacnews, will shortly be made available to subscribing broadcasters in the Pacific rim countries.

Pacnews will be gathering news from 13 countries spread over a vast area of the Pacific, including Niue, Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Cook Ilands, Marshall Islands, Belau, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Micronesia and Papua New Guinea.

LONDON: MTV Europe has been granted authorisation by the Flemish government for MTV to be distributed in Flanders. The service is now available to 165,000 households on the Integan cable network. The 24 hour music channel is a partnership between Mirror Group Newspapers, British Telecommunications and Viacom International.

LONDON: Sky Channel has signed an agreement with the allinstrumental music Landscape Channel to carry its programming from Octoer 1. Sky will feature three hours of Landscape Channel programming, without advertising, from approximately 02:00 (UK time) every morning to its audience extending to 12.6 million homes in 21 countries. This Landscape Channel programming offers a unique home-shopping facility with all music played available by tele-shopping or mail order catalogue.

The Landscape Channel offers a new form of all music television with high quality stereo music ranging from classical and contemporary rock, pop and jazz to New Age music.

Daring moves in TVS takeover

LONDON: TVS (Television South) has taken over the American company MTM in a deal worth £190 million (US$323 million). The deal gives TVS sales rights to some US series such as *Hill Street Blues*, *Lou Grant* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, the library itself is thought to be valued at about £185 million. The take over has proved to be a daring step for TVS, which is capitalised at about £120 million (US$204 million), although MTM's assets are thought to be worth about twice those of TVS.

The take over is all part of the formation of a 'new' company – TVS Entertainment which will take over the entire operation and holdings of the existing TVS at the end of July. Two French investors, Canal Plus and General d'Images will also take 10 per cent of the new company and each take place on the board. Former owners of MTM, including Mary Tyler Moore will have a 15 per cent stake and two of the previous owners, Arthur Price and Mel Blumenthal also have seats on the board. The takeover of MTM probably secures a good trading relationship between TVS and the US.

Hollywood set in Sri Lanka

On location in Sri Lanka: 'A Dangerous Life' – the last days of the Marcos Regime.

COLOMBO: A television and cinema centre in Sri Lanka costing R 350 million (US$10 million) could be set up in the near future. Talks have almost concluded on the development which will be used to mainly serve big US and western TV and film projects on location in the Asian region.

The big US investor Donald McDeweitt has been in Sri Lanka for final discussions. He will collaborate with Sri Lanka Location Services Ltd.

The project under discussion will entail the Americans setting up a studio and lab and Donald McDewitt said plans include having Hollywood style sound stages, special effect systems, state of the art dubbing facilities and all post production facilities. He commented, "The US and western film and TV makers who come to Asia on location have to go back to the US and Western studios to process their films at a very high cost. We want to make use of the very efficient knowledgeable technicians, they don't have the sophisticated equipment required. Our plan is to shoot and make the complete cinema or TV film in Sri Lanka itself." **BC Perera**

EEC Media helps Indies

BRUSSELS: Independent producers hoping to attend MIPCOM but worried by the high costs involved are being invited to participate in a new joint initiative.

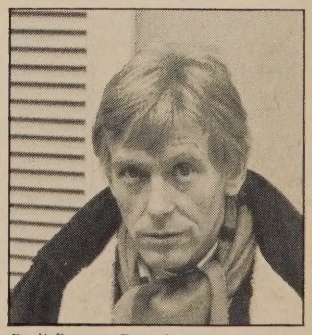
Good Rates

Euro aim, with the support of the EEC's Media programme, has been able to negotiate advantageous rates with the market organisers, so that first-time attendees from all over Europe, can take part for just FFr2,000 (US$300).

This will cover registration fee, a contribution to the 450M^2 umbrella stand, and access to the legal financial and technical advice, interpreters, reception facilities, 25 projection cabins, lead programme publicity and telex, fax etc which will be supplied by Euro Aim. There will also be a database with details of prospective international purchasers.

Access for 200

The stand can accommodate 200 independent production companies; space will be allocated to 24 from the UK, France and Germany and 12 for the other EEC countries. Interested parties should apply in writing to Euro Aim, 26 Rue des Mirimes, 1000 Brussels, with a general documentation on their activites and the programmes they wish to present at MIPCOM. Final date is August 10. Further details available from Michel Borgiovanni on 32-2 518 1460.



Rudi Barnet: Co-ordinator

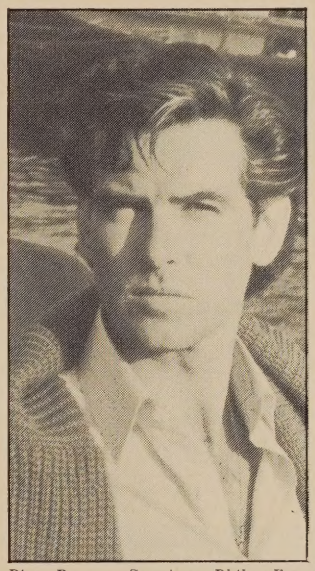
In production

A regular feature of *TV World*. Send details of programmes in, or approaching, production to TV World, 27 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6PR.

PIERCE Brosnan (*Remington Steele, James Clavell's Noble House*) is heading an all-star international cast in *Around the World in 80 Days,* a three-part, six-hour **NBC** mini-series based on Jules Verne's classic novel. The lavish **Harmony Gold** production – about the attempt of 19th-century aristocrat Phileas Fogg (Brosnan) to win a bet by circling the globe in 80 days – began filming last month in London, Hong Kong, Thailand and Yugoslavia.

Monty Python star Eric Idle is playing Passpartout, Fogg's loyal valet and traveling companion, while Peter Ustinov stars as the intrepid Detective Fix, who pursues Fogg around the world, believing he has robbed the Bank of England.

There will also be appearances from Ariel Dombasle, Christopher Lee and Robert Wagner.



Pierce Brosnan: Starring as Phileas Fogg in Harmony Gold's lavish production 'Around the World in 80 Days'.

THE team responsible for *Anne of Green Gables,* **Sullivan Films** of Canada, has started a new film *Looking For Miracles.*

Written for the screen by Kevin Sullivan and Stuart McLean, this feature-length film is based on the A E Hotchner memoir of the same name. Set in Toronto and surrounding area, *Looking For Miracles* is the moving yet funny story of two brothers who come to terms with each other during the height of the Great Depression.

Greg Spottiswood and Sachary Bennett have been cast as the brothers. Patricia Phillips, Joe Flaherty and Patricia Gage have also been cast in principal roles for the two hour film scheduled to play on CBC November 27, 1988.

PORTMAN Productions' third major mini-series *Voice of the Heart* based on the best-selling novels of Barbara Taylor Bradford is currently in production in the UK.

Principal photography began on July 23 on *Learning the Ropes,* a new half hour sit com being produced by **Producers Group International** in association with **CTV Television Network Ltd., Cineplex Odeon TV** and **Quintex Entertainment.** Four pilot episodes have been produced and an additional 20 episodes are scheduled for production. *Learning the Ropes* is taped in Toronto before a live audience. The programme will be seen in prime time on CTV and in the US via a first run syndication line up.

The £4.5 million four-hour show, directed by Tony Wharmby and starring Lindsay Wagner, will be seen on **HTV** in the UK, and the US rights have been acquired by **Gemmy Productions Inc.** The series is being produced in association with the **Seven Network Australia.**

PRINCIPAL photography has begun in Toronto on *My Secret Identity,* a new half-hour series produced by **Sunrise Films** in association with Scholastic Production, MCA Television and CTV. The pilot for the series was filmed in Toronto last autumn, and an additional 23 episodes have been ordered by CTV for prime-time broadcast in Canada, and by MCA Television for first-run syndication in the US.

My Secret Identity is a comedy/adventure series based on the exploits of Andrew Clements, a typical 15 year-old, who gets zapped by a photon-beam and develops superhuman powers.

BBC Television has started filming a new Michael Palin script. *Number 27* which stars Nigel Planer (The Young Ones) as an estate agent and 90 year-old Joyce Carey as an eccentric owner of an antique-filled house, trying to protect her home fro property developers.

Meanwhile, the Factually-based Drama Unit has begun filming on *Virtuoso,* a movie based on the life and personal struggles of one of the UK's greatest pianists John Ogdon. Ogdon was the surprise winner of the 1962 Tchaikovsky competition, and shot to stardom, only to suffer a mental breakdown 10 years later. He fought to save his sanity his talent and his marriage. *Virtuoso,* produced by Ideal Communication with the BBC is the story of those dark years, and stars Alfred Molina (*Prick Up Your Ears*) as Ogdon and Alison Steadman as his wife.

The £1 million budget film is being shot in the UK, Europe and the US, and John Ogdon himself will provide the music working with the London Symphony Orchestra.

DAVID Copperfield stars as host and the Paris Opera House itself is the setting for the one-hour entertainment special *The Secret of the Phantom of the Opera.* The special was taped at the Paris Opera House in early July and is scheduled to be seen in the US on ABC this autumn.

Copperfield, world famous for his feats of magic, that include the disappearance of the Statue of Liberty and his walk through The Great Wall of China investigates his long fascination with Gaston Leroux's story of the Paris Opera House; opera singer Christine Daae and another master of illusion, the Phantom himself.

Big story

As Copperfield begins to search the Opera House for the settings that form the background for the Phantom's and Christine's story, he meets Lerous. When Leroux discovers Copperfield's interest in ghosts, magic and the Phantom, he offers to explore along with him, the myths, the legends and "What might have been."

Big sales

Canadian film and television star, Heath Lamberts makes a special guest appearance as Gaston Leroux and French star Dominique Vallee portrays Christine Daae.

Written and directed by John McGreevy, *The Secret of the Phantom of the Opera* is being produced by **Comedia Productions,** the recently formed joint-venture between Taffner Enterprises and Primedia Entertainment and by Jean Chalopin's C&D Production, Paris.

In additon to the ABC sale Taffner has already sold the special internationally to the Nine Network in Australia; TVNZ; ATV, Hong Kong and CTV Network, Canada.

Six sets up shop

Yet another syndication network has been formed in Italy — this time focussing on music, Stephen Dembner reports.

AFTER the dismemberment of EURO-TV into Odeon and Italia 7, former president Gianni Ferrauto has formed another syndication network in Italy. The new net, called "Super Six", links local broadcasters in 16 of Italy's 20 regions with a programming schedule heavily focussed on music.

In fact, the guiding principle of the new network is a specific targeting of audience and programming. Says Ferrauto, "To have a future in Italy, a new television panorama is divided into two groups. In the first, we find RAI and the Fininvest networks. In the second group, we find everyone else, but with only some 15 per cent of the market to fight over. If we exclude the exclusively local broadcasters and the specialised transmissions that already exist, the market share that remains is about seven per cent.

"To develop a network aimed at a general audience, which would be on a par with RAI and Berlusconi in terms of production and broadcast quality would cost at least 250-300 billion lire (US$200-220 million). And even at that level, there is a good possibility of coming up with only the crumbs left over from the majors in terms of advertising revenue."

At this point, explains Ferrauto, in order to develop a network aimed at a defined audience there were three choices: information, sports, or music. "Our decision was to go the music route."

The cornerstone of the Super Six programming day is a daily three-hour block of programming obtained directly from Music Box via satellite. These programmes are then "Italianised" with local voice-overs. In addition, the associated broadcaster (see box) receive 3-4 four hours daily of telenovelas, animated cartoons, regional news, sports and films, many of which also have a strong musical component.

Programming is divided into four dayparts: morning, early afternoon, early fringe (pre-primetime), and prime/late fringe. The morning offering is a Latin American telenovela, *The Idol*, paired with a one-hour concert special. Early afternoon is taken from Music Box. The early fringe is a combination of animated cartoons and Music Box, whilst the main evening offering alternates music and seasoned although not necessarily vintage films.

In terms of financial organizations, 70 per cent of Super Six is owned by Eurofinance, a holding controlled by Aurelio Paolinelli; the remaining 30 per cent belongs to Ferrauto. The network has a syndication relationship with the participating broadcasters.

"When I first introduced the syndication concept in Italy," says Ferrauto, "people thought I was crazy. But it has proven its potential. The participating broadcasters get 6-7 hours daily of prepared programming, and in exchange receive a 30 per cent commission on the national advertising which we succeed in placing."

Ferrauto estimated that Super Six would cost some 9 billion lire (US$7.5 million) per year to operate and said that audience goals were 500,000 – one million total daily viewers. Based on these levels, Ferrauto speculated that advertising revenues might reach 20-25 billion lire annually, by the end of 1991. "As you can deduce from these figures," said Ferrauto, "the first year we expect to run at a loss, but it is a necessary investment."

In announcing the new network, Ferrauto stated that arrangements had already been made with Auditel, the Italian metred rating service, to begin counting Super Six viewers in September 1988. "I have great confidence in the top management of Auditel," said Ferrauto. "This system is certainly the best the market can offer at the moment." ■

'SUPER SIX'

ITALIAN REGION	BROADCASTER
PIEMONTE/VALLE D'AOSTA	PRIMANTENNA
LOMBARDIA	MILANO TV E RETE 55
LIGURIA	RETE AZZURRA
VENETO	TELEVENEZIA
EMILIA ROMAGNA	Group of Local Broadcasters
TOSCANA	Group of Local Broadcasters
MARCHE	GALASSIA TV
LAZIO	RETE ORO
ABRUZZO R MOLISE	ANTENNA 10
CAMPANIA	NAPOLI TV
PUGLIE	TELESVEVA
CALABRIA	RADIO TELE SPAZIO
WESTERN SICILIA	TELESCIROCCO
NORTH-EASTERN SICILIA	R.T.P.
SOUTH-EASTERN SICILIA	TELE 1 TRIS
SARDEGNA	Group of Local Broadcasters

Stripping for success

IN ITALIAN, the words for gambling parlour (casinó) and brothel (casino) differ only in the accent over the final "o". By mixing elements of both words, the new Berlusconi-controlled network, Italia 7 has come up with a game show with high sleaze appeal. In fact, despite its 22:30 airtime, *Colpo Grosso* is regularly gaining audiences of more than one million viewers (a share of almost 10 per cent).

Hosted by Umberto Smaila (also host of a game show on Rete 4), *Colpo Grosso* is based on a combination of elements from standard gambling games – roulette, poker, etc. What gives the show its "appeal" is that as the contestants win or lose money, a backdrop of show girls remove their clothing. To add further spice to the already peppery mix, the contestants themselves (almost certainly planted actors and actresses) can sacrifice garments to gain a bigger stake.

The result is a tuxedo-clad host surrounded by models and contestants in various stages of undress, often bordering on complete nudity.

Admittedly not a very high class act, *Colpo Grosso* nonetheless is one more example of Silvio Berlusconi's ability and willingness to do almost anything to gain a bigger piece of the total Italian television audience. Although the programme garnered contemptuous comments when it first went on the air, the continuing increases in viewers have put the shoe on the other foot. In fact, show host Smaila has taken to opening the programme with veiled comments about how the people who originally belittled *Colpo Grosso* must actually be watching, given the audience figures.

In terms of advertising, *Colpo Grosso's* first clients were almost exclusively sex-related health and beauty products, but as the audience grows, more middle-of-the-road advertisers are beginning to appear.

So for international producers looking for the "formula for success" for Italian television, minimum intellect, large quantities of easy money and sex seem to be the keys. Not very attractive but, with apologies to Walter Cronkite, "That's the way it is." ■

Miro gets her house in order

The reign of Europe's only woman Director General is going smoothly, but the programming test is yet to come, reports Jose Maria Villagrassa

A COMMON result of politics becoming too closely involved with television is that, while promises may be many, changes are often slow in coming. This is mainly because politicians are fearful of expansion; while a wider television network to manipulate is desirable while their party is in power, should they lose control, they hand over that enlargened media tool to the rival.

This reasoning accounts for the endless stalling in Spanish private television and the growth of the state network TVE.

Although parliament has passed a law giving the go-ahead to private broadcasting, the government has not provided a budget for the unification and expansion of the transmitter network in order to make possible the reception of the three new authorised channels. The money required for this is in the region of 20-30 billion pesetas (US$164-246 million), and until the administration comes up with the cash, the parliament's green light does not have much significance for the candidates applying for the licences. At least one company involved in a consortium, the newspaper group *El Pais,* frustrated with waiting, has turned instead to programme production.

Meanwhile TVE continues to forge ahead, under the leadership of director general Pilar Miro. TVE's budget for 1988 is 70.3 billion pesetas (US$577.4 million) to supply 10,000 broadcast hours between the two channels. In 1987, TVE-1 transmitted 6,300 hours and TVE-2 aired 2,892. This year, the second channel will be broadcasting more hours, and TVE-1 will be going 24 hours at weekends.

Pilar Miro has got the TVE house in order, mainly by her readiness to be involved with the smallest details. This has earned her a reputation for interfering in some quarters — for example, she chooses the programme presenters herself, an area which she is not directly in charge of — but from the public's point of view, she has acted in a less controversial manner than her predecessor Jose Maria Calvino. TVE's relationship with the autonomous channels has softened a great deal, and overall, any politicians wishing to depose her have had little ammunition to use against her.

The accounts are favourable too; advertising revenue totalled 98 billion pesetas (US$804 million) in 1987, which covered the operating costs of radio and the regional subsidiaries of TVE. TVE employs 5,300 staff who are spread between the two national channels and a network of regional broadcasters who receive some of the second channel's schedule.

TVE-1 produced a high proportion of its 1987 in-house: 66.58 per cent, with 33.42 per cent acquired from outside. The second channel produced 55.69 per cent of its schedule, and bought in 44.31 per cent. The average audience is 24 million people per day.

Spain has discovered gameshows, and they can now be found on the screen at almost any time of the day. *El Precio Justo* (The Price Is Right) has taken over from *1,2,3* (3,2,1 in other countries), but it has not met with universal approval. Many complain about the high commercial content, something which Spanish public television is not used to.

TVE has begun to promote heavily its own productions, at the same time relegating several US imports such as *The Cosby Show, L.A. Law* and *Golden Girls* to non primetime slots. Successful foreign shows have been moved to a Wednesday night (*Hill Street Blues* is currently on) and Thursday night *(Moonlighting),* with Saturday nights being devoted to short mini-series.

However, because very few series were produced during the last years of Calvino's reign as DG, TVE only aired five in primetime during 1987. This autumn will see the premiere of some of the series that Miro promised over the last two years. These, and other productions not yet completed will make or break the reputation on which Miro was elected back in 1986.

Miro — who, rumour has it, may be appointed Secretary of Culture — has also defined clearly the strategy of both

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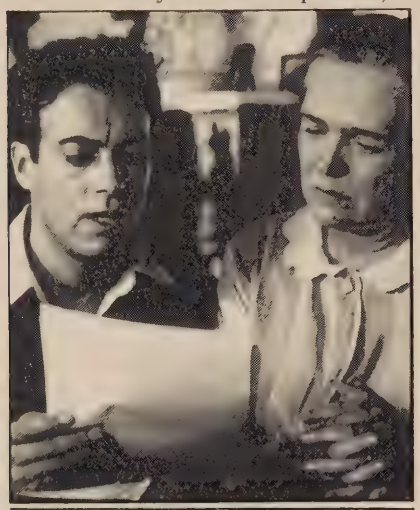
Miro's ordered house

▶ continued from p11

channels. TVE-1, the more commercial, contains many gameshows, light entertainment and quality films. The second channel has become the closet where sports, cultural programmes and regional "outs" are stored.

As long as the private channels do not pose too great a threat, TVE can look ahead with optimism. Only TV-3 Catalonia offers any serious competition; it



Helping the state network to grow: 'Lorca, Muerte de un Poeta' 'Los Marginados', and 'Las Gallinas de Cervantes' — all drama from TVE.

beats TVE-2 in its own territory, and can take some audience from TVE-1. Otherwise, it is only at the high points of the autonomous channels' schedules that some audience may be lost from the second channel, never from the first.

Indies in limbo

Spain is certainly not overrun with independent production companies. Jose Maria Villagrassa spoke to one in Barcelona who, nevertheless, is doing rather well.

"ONE OF the greatest problems that exists for the independent audiovisual producing companies in Spain is the current indecisiveness of what's happening. This situation is based on the fact that private television is not yet functioning and it is not known when it will. Also, public television channels act as if they were private channels."

This is how Pere Roca, from IMATCO, a production company based in Barcelona described the state of independent professional television companies to *TV World*. "The chance came with the regional autonomous channels to create a structure that was different from Spanish state TV, a structure most like Channel 4 in the UK with good business relations with the independents. But instead they have placed non-professionals in the mediating posts, and key function along the same lines as TVE, with large studios, excessive personnel and bureaucracy and enormous amortisations that weaken the relationship with independent companies."

IMATCO was founded as a film production company in 1978. The film *Mater Amatisima* has been shown in several festivals, like Cannes during the Quinzeine des Realisateure and in San Sebastian in 1980. During the last few years IMATCO has started to work for television. Its film *Daniya* was made in collaboration with TV-3, FR3, Sept and RTV Morocco.

Strong contradiction

One of the strongest contradictions in this country is that to be recognised at home one first has to be recognised abroad. Gaumont planned the shoot of *Carmen*, the film by Francesco Rosi, and chose IMATCO as the technical production company. IMATCO managed everything connected with the central administration, transactions with the banks and found financial guarantees of every kind. IMATCO also organised the shoot in Spain. Another product created for abroad has been *Ricardo Montalban in Spain*, a special programme which was made for the General Secretariat of Turism, and broadcast in New York, Chicago, New Orleans and Los Angeles.

At present, IMATCO is busy with *The New Spain*, a series in four chapters of 60 minutes each, co-produced with Seventh Art Productions from London. Channel 4 has showed firm interest in this and has paid the budget necessary for the research and the development of the project. "As there have been changes in Channel 4, we are waiting for them to settle down and then see what happens," says Pere Roca.

Recently, IMATCO has signed a contract with NVC Arts International for the production of *Las Bacantes*, a theatrical production created by the Teatro de la Cuadra de Sevilla (Andalucia) based on a classical text by Euripides. This is a production that has generated excellent reviews abroad, as it is a combination of Greek tragedy and flamenco. The shoot will begin this autumn and the 120 minute film will be ready at the end of the year.

Pere Roca's advice to foreign companies looking to co-produce with Spain through independent production companies is not overly optimistic. "The legislation in Spain does not allow for financial support from tax shelters or production bonuses, as in France, for example. Co-productions are welcome here, but only if the Spanish producer receives compensation on the total sales of the product. ■

CHANNELS' ANNUAL BUDGETS	
TV-3	US$78.8 million
TVG	US$33 million
ETB	US$51.7 million

CHANNELS' RATIO OF FOREIGN SHOWS	
TV-3	42%
TVG	30%
ETB	45%

Berlusconi moves in on Catalan TV

Spain's autonomous stations are going through a period of consolidation, by linking up with other commercial operations, Jose Maria Villagrassa reports

THE only ray of hope for the autonomous channels recently, suffering from the indecision of the socialist party, has been the new tendency to thaw projects which had been put on ice in parts of the country where the economy and population are stronger.

At present, apart from the three channels already up and running (TV-3, TVG and ETB) there are three others under development: Valencia, Andalucia and Madrid, the latter being rather behind the other. There are no dates arranged yet as to the start of broadcasting as staff groups have to be fully structured and general guidelines have not yet been drawn up. One of the biggest hurdles these channels are having to overcome is the lack of fully-trained professionals.

RTVV, in Valencia, has finally solved a dispute between director general Amadeu Fabregat, named last April, and the president of the administration board and Fabregat is now moving ahead with staff recruitment, defining the style of the new channel, and the commencement of the building of the TVV studios, which are due to be completed and fully-equipped by autumn 1988.

Over at Andalucia, things seem to be going well. Some of the personnel already recruited were present at the recent MIP-TV, although the full level of staffing will not be reached until late 1989. This accounts for the current small budget, sufficient just to keep things ticking over: 4,397 million pesetas (US$36.1 million) to be invested on buildings and staff and 1,500 million (US$12.3 million) on programme creation. There is no budget for foreign product acquisition, although in-house production is starting in preparation for start of broadcasting next year — the date has yet to be announced.

The three channels already broadcasting have recently made pacts with other operations in order to strengthen their competitiveness. TV-3 Catalonia has signed a deal with Italian tycoon Silvio Berlusconi while TVG Galacia made an accord with Canal 10, the Spanish-speaking channel transmitting via satellite from London.

Berlusconi had been wanting to enter the Spanish private television market, but when he realised how slowly this sector was advancing, he sought a quicker route via the ambitious Catalan station TV-3. He came to Spain, praised the Catalan people, flattered the local football team and kept mentioning the Olympics.

Entertainment and news from TV3. Top: 'Tres Estrelles' and 'Trenta Minutas'.

"Berlusconi is the most important entrepreneur in the Mediterranean," said TV-3 Director Enric Canals to *TV World*. "We are a public company, but we are working with a desire to be competitive, and therefore, commercial. Our requirements have led us to contact and come to agreements with big European enterprises used to operating very commercial outfits. I will admit our first contact with Berlusconi came about because he had bought all the rights to *Dallas*. We began talks about one production and we realised we could talk further, expand co-operation to other fields such as films, documentaries — even to commercial policy and sales."

The agreement, which is for three years, gives TV-3 the right to broadcast the US and European series whose rights Reteitalia holds, 20 films a year, the participation of TV-3 in the production of the *Rafaella Carrà Show*, the acquisition by Reteitalia of TV-3's own programmes for transmission throughout the Spanish territory, joint purchase of foreign productions and joint negotiations for advertising on TV-3 and Pubitalia.

"At the moment, the Spanish government is not policing the airwaves," said Canals. "Local television stations exist; there are satellite broadcasts from London etc. The Private Television Act is a law built on very poor ground; under this law, it will be difficult to make the companies profitable. The agreement with Berlusconi is over in three years, and he will be free to do whatever he wants. We, however, will be in a better position to compete with private television when it does exist."

TV-3 has impressive studios in Sant Joan Despi, just outside Barcelona, which cost some 9.03 billion pesetas (US$74 million). The complex consists of four buildings with a total floorspace of 30,648m^2. The News Division has three studios, 300m^2, 150m^2 and a 40m^2 for continuity. The Audiovisual Production Division (CPA) has four studios, an 800m^2 and three 400m^2. This investment has meant that TV-3 has in the main done most of its programmes in-house, rather than commission anything from independent producers.

Canals' opinion is that, "it all depends on quality. The independent production sector is not large here, and they do not offer product of sufficient quality. Our job is not to promote the independent sector; there is no scope for experiments or practice. I should like to point out, though, that ours is a service television like any other. Our commercial policy is applied above all to primetime."

Reaching 94 per cent of the Catalan population (4.5 million) and with a 1988 budget of 9.6 billion pesetas (US$78.8 million), TV-3 is the leading autonomous channel in Spain, and commercially the most powerful. Predicted advertising revenue for 1988 is around 6 billion pesetas (US$49.2 million). The channel has a total audience of around 47 per cent who watch TV-3 for a daily minimum of 30 minutes. In the 92 hours of weekly broadcast, there is a 58 per cent of in-house production from a staff of 800 people against 42 per cent of imports. The most successful programmes this spring were *Blanc o Negre*

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Berlusconi moves in

► continued from p13

(White or Black — an amusing game show); *St Elsewhere, Angel Casas Show* and sports.

TVG, in Galacia, has joined forces with Canal 10 through an agreement which covers the co-production of all kinds of programmes. The variety show *Vernes Show* is soon to be replaced by *Entre Amigos 10,* which will be co-produced by TVG and Canal 10 in two different versions; Galacian and Spanish. Another aspect of the deal regards the joint purchase of foreign shows.

TVG had already been collaborating with Venevision, one of Venezuela's leading commercial channels, ATC Canal 7 in Argentina and the Institute of Radio and Television in Cuba, countries where large numbers of Galacian emigrants live. TVG's aim is to broadcast programmes in every Galacian colony — Galacians constitute the biggest Spanish emigrant population.

TVG started broadcasting on July 24, 1985. In three years, it has developed the reputation of a modest network, although its work as a public service is important. The broadcasts in Galacian cover 77 per cent of the territory, which has 3 million inhabitants, 2.2 million being over the age of 14. According to a General Media Survey, TVG achieved during February/March an average daily audience of 26.4 per cent.

> *"Our commercial policy is applied above all to primetime."*

The company's Production and Broadcast Station at San Marcos has three studios covering 5,000m^2: one 300m^2, used for programmes, one 150m^2 for news programmes and a third one for continuity. Currently TVG has a rate of 70 per cent in-house production in a total broadcast week of 80 hours. The staff numbers 224, with 119 freelancers.

TVG's budget for 1988 was 4.3 billion pesetas (US$33 million), and it expects a commercial revenue of 1.2 billion pesetas (US$10 million). It receives a local government subsidy of 3.9 billion pesetas (US$32.3 million). Among the most successful foreign shows were *Magnum, Perry Mason, The Equalizer, The Singing Detective, Scarecrow and Mrs King, EastEnders* and *St. Elsewhere.*

ETB — Euskal Telebista — in the Basque country is the only autonomous channel not to have established a commercial agreement with an outside operator, but it will benefit from parts of the TV-3/Berlusconi link, particularly those related to the purchase of programmes and co-productions. At the moment, the autonomous channels maintain a policy of sharing news, they have agreed on sports broadcasts and they are always present as a group in festivals and markets.

This year, ETB has a budget of 6.3 billion pesetas (US$51.7 million) for their two channels, one in Spanish, and the other in Euzkera. It produces 55 per cent of its own programmes and acquires 45 per cent of its schedule. The most popular programmes are, on the First Channel, the Wednesday movie slot *Zine Pantaila,* and the sports news on Sunday evening, *Kirolez Kirol.* On the Second Channel, the Sunday night movie *Sesion de Domingo, Detras de Sirimiri* and *Inigo en Direco* (interviews and music) and the evening news *Teleberri.* The top foreign shows are *Sherlock Holmes, The Intruders* and *WKRP in Cincinnati.* ■

VIDEO • DANCE 88

The
INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CENTRE/IMZ,
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1st International Video Dance Grand Prix

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The International Dance Grand Prix will be awarded to a production combining supreme achievements in the fields of
choreography
compositions,
performance and
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supplemented by special awards for each of the above disciplines. The Grand Prix is endowed with FF 100.000.

The competition is open to audiovisual recordings of all forms of dance, produced after January 1, 1985. The entered tapes have to be UMATIC, Low Band, 3/4". The IMZ, umbrella organisation of more than a hundred TV-organisations, film- and videoproducers, is in charge of the coordinations.

Deadline for registration: August 31, 1988.
For further information as well as competition rules/registration forms:

IMZ
Lothringerstr. 20
A-1030 Wien

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Telex: 1164 43 box a
Please start your telex
with "music-center"
New number from August 1,
1988: 75311745 imz a.

The International Video Dance Grand Prix is a Région Languedoc-Roussillon event, organised by the IMZ.

Hotel is set to follow the klinik

A new soap is due out of the *Schwarzwaldklinik* stable in the autumn. This time the producer has gone abroad to find a dramatic setting, Bill Peterson reports.

WOLFGONG Rademann is on a roll. After the unprecedented domestic and international success of his *Schwarzwaldklinik,* the Berlin producer is now shooting a new series, *Hotel Paradies,* and has yet another up his sleeve. Whether Rademann can repeat the glory of *Schwarzwaldklinik's* 66 per cent ratings and overwhelming media attention is the question on everyone's mind. But all the elements are there, and *Hotel Paradies* has the shine of another successful Rademann enterprise.

Shooting has been going on all spring and summer on the vacation island of Mallorca. The series portrays the on-going story of a German hotel family intercut with a new dramatic story-line for each episode. Like the hospital format, the vacation hotel setting lends itself to such treatment, with guests appearing for an episode and then disappearing again. Unlike the US series *Hotel,* most of *Hotel Paradies'* action is not played out in interior standing sets, but is being shot in locations around the island, giving the series a firm sense of place, common to German television production.

Although Mallorca has, in recent years, gained a reputation as a low-budget destination for package tourists, it is still full of jewel-like settings to stir viewers' dreams of vacation paradise. Since the Germans are about the most travel-hungry nation on earth, the series seems destined for a wide appeal.

In fact, vacationers on Mallorca will be hard-pressed to find the actual "Hotel Paradies" which is a combination of a small hotel near Deja and other locations. At least an innocent Mallorcan hotel is not destined to face the onslaught of rubber-neckers making life difficult for the Black Forest sanitarium used for *Schwarzwaldklinik.*

After studio work in Berlin, veteran TV director Klaus-Peter Witt will return with his crew next summer to finish the 90 minute pilot and 25 x 52 minute series, which will be shown on ZDF in the winter of 1989-90.

For *Hotel Paradies,* ZDF is trying a technique new to Germany, showing a series twice a week. This may mean *Hotel Paradies* will not lose its freshness during the 13 week run, as seemed to happen during the last season of *Schwarzwaldklinik.* With the exception of WDR's *Lindenstrasse,* German viewers are not at all accustomed to long-running domestic series returning season after season.

On the subject of returning for several seasons, *Schwarzwaldklinik* recently wrapped after completion of the 70th episode. Ratings slipped over the last season and the series will not be continued. It seems the public has had enough. West German television's unwieldy production process does not allow the speedy resonses familiar to American viewers, where series are started and cancelled on short notice. *Schwarzwaldklinik* imitators *Lorenz und Soehne* and *Waldhaus* made their full runs despite failing to catch on. What is made months or years ahead of its air-date and paid for is always broadcast.

Having two series in production has been hard on Rademann, who is a solo worker with no large support staff. This spring and summer have seen him constantly shuttling between the Black Forest and Mallorca with the occasional stopover in Berlin. "I'm worn out," he told *TV World.* "I never wanted to make more than one series at a time and here I am with two. With the new series beginning next year, I'll again have two to contend with."

Just what the new series will be, Rademann won't say for the moment. Hints and rumours indicate the locations will again be outside Germany.

When pressed, Rademann indicated he would not be taking his own advice (see *TV World,* August 1987) and make a comedy series. "In the US all the top shows are comedies," he said. "But in Germany we don't have one show. We have the most humorless television in the world. But I've done comedy already. I'm in my drama period right now. The new series will be a drama." A close associate of Rademann indicated the producer has been considering German adaptations of foreign scripts, but fell short of being able to transmute US or British humour for the German funnybone. The two top theatrical successes of the year, *Oedipussi* and *Otto* have both been comedies. ■

'Hotal Paradies': jewel-like settings

The past makes future for Chronos

One German company has based its reputation on packaging archive material, especially rare and politically fascinating footage, Bill Peterson reports.

"I'VE JUST guaranteed the survival of Chronos Film," says Bengt von zur Muehlen proudly.

The managing director of the Berlin film archive and production company has just concluded a deal with RIAS-TV to keep the company in work for the next few years. It is the biggest coup of his career. The contract is for a series on Germany's legendary *Reichstrasse 1,* the primary highway from the Baltic Sea through Berlin to Aschen, which now passes through parts of the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, both parts of Berlin and ends in West Germany. In addition, Chronos will make documentaries on the fifteen district capitals of East Germany and the 20 districts of Greater Berlin.

It's a ready-made deal. RIAS needs hours of information programming with appeal to its East German target audience and Chronos has the largest historical film archive in Germany, probably the largest historical film archive in Germany, probably the largest trove of historical documentary film in any private hands in the world.

From Koenigsberg to Kaliningrad' — Before Chronos no Westerners had been allowed there.

"I collect films like others collect stamps," says von zur Muehlen. The collection began in the early sixties while he was teaching at Hofstra University in New York and studying at Columbia. There he gained access to American military archives. "I acquired knowledge of how it works but I didn't realise how important it was at the time," he says. After returning to Berlin in 1967, von zur Muehlen turned his collecting and producing into a full-time job.

His 1961 entry into the film production market, *Test for the West,* a Berlin documentary, was the beginning of a long chain of productions. Chronos has now made 270 documentaries, most about World War II and its aftermath.

"Producing started as a chance to bargain for more material and to financially support my collection," he says.

Chronos produces all its films privately and then sells to German TV, unusual in Germany's landscape of contract productions and pre-sales. Thus the firm has retained the rights for all its films.

A few years ago, the Soviets approached Chronos for material for their monumental twenty part series on the twentieth century, and von zur Muehlen proposed to swap what they needed for Soviet archive material of interest to the Germans. Although the Soviets never fully honoured their side of the deal until Gorbachev took power, the result has been a truly lucrative harvest of historical material and a unique cooperation for a western film company.

Unique

Based on Soviet archive material, they have made a whole chain of films ranging from the liberation of the Auschwitz and Majdanek concentration camps to the occupation by the Germans of the Soviet city of Krasnodar. Recently Chronos has begun focusing on the former eastern provinces of Germany lost to Russia or Poland after World War II. This is topic close to the heart of many Germans, who feel a great injustice at the loss of so much of their country. Many survivers of the resulting mass displacement and their sons and daughters still retain a nostalgic fidelity to the lost eastern "homelands." Von zur Muehlen himself is from Estland, now the Soviet republic of Estonia.

Rare power

Chronos was the first Western film company ever allowed to shoot in the Soviet city of Kaliningrad, once the great German city of Koenigsberg, one of the members of the once-powerful Hanseatic Federation which included Hamburg, Luebeck and Bremen. The resulting film, *From Koenigsberg to Kaliningrad,* used Russian archival and material shot by Chronos to weave a film of rare power. It is a portrayal of a vanished cityscape changed into a modern Soviet city whose inhabitants have only a dim awareness they are living on the site of a once-great German metropolis. Before Chronos no Germans or other Westerners were allowed to visit Kaliningrad, much less film there.

What to buy? that is the question

ARD's pre-evening executives are looking for product for 1993. But so far, reports Bill Peterson, they can't find anything to suit their needs.

AMIDST the thousands of hours of programming on offer at MIP-TV 88 from the kaleidoscope of television on sale at the Palais des Festivals, one buyer came up empty. He's Hans-Bodo von Dincklage, the head of the ARD commission responsible for the "pre-evening" period on West Germany's First Channel.

"Pre-evening" refers to the slot between 17.30 and 20.00 when ARD regional stations break away from the national network and broadcast long blocks of commercials wrapped around dramatic series of the "family entertainment" genre, while ZDF is simulating them on the second channel. It is an especially vital daypart for German public TV programmers because it is the only prime-time period during which commercials may be broadcast. Regulations do not permit advertising on the public stations after 20.00. ARD gets 25 per cent of its budget from the sale of spots. The time is actually sold by subsidiaries of the regional stations making up the ARD consortium. ADF gets about 40 per cent of its income from advertising.

Thus the valuable pre-evening is the only period during which ratings have more significance than the pride of the programmers.

The blocks of commercials are so long they are a definite tune-out factor. An advertising block is often stuck into the middle of a dramatic series, hoping the viewers will stick through ten minutes of commercials to see how the story ends. Actually only about 10 per cent of viewers over 14 watch the commercials. For this, advertisers pay a heavy price, ranging from a couple of thousand marks on the smaller regional stations to WDR's DM 30,000 (US$16,000) for a 30 second spot, up to ZDF's DM 60,000 (US$33,300) for a national audience.

Therefore it's no surprise the buyers are very particular about what goes into this vital daypart. About 40 per cent of the pre-evening programming on ARD and two thirds of it on ZDF is German production. But this is expensive. They rarely get away with costs of under a half a million marks an hour (US$277,000). By contrast, they pay around DM 50,000 (US$27,700) for an imported hour and then spend about DM 30,000 on dubbing.

Hans-Bodo von Dincklage confirmed to *TV World* that nothing had been found at MIP-TV. That's not to say ARD will be short of pre-evening programming in the coming season. The programmers are now buying for the 1993 broadcast year. The actual acquisitions are made on behalf of ARD by Degeto-Film. The ARD buying committee meets every few months to consider product for the national pool. ARD needs 600 episodes a year. ZDF uses 350 episodes.

What, exactly, do they need? 25 or 50 minute dramatic series, low on violence and high on excitement. Sex is permissable within limits and nudity is not necessarily considered sex. While the buying is officially for 1993, trendy subjects can simply be run in the place of a more timeless programme. Since it takes time to make dubs, lead-time is about a year, minimum.

Previous successful imports in the pre-evening have included *Scarecrow and Mrs King*, *Remington Steele*, *Falcon Crest*, *Hart to Hart*, and *Knots Landing*. By no means are all from the US. *A Country Practise* was bought from Australia and *Degrassi Junior High* from Canada. *Moonlighting*, on the other hand, was rejected.

Dincklage and ZDF buyer Josep Göhlen will be ranging the world in search of the right programming. This year Dincklage will cover the LA Screenings, the BBC Showcase, the Nordic Screenings as well as NATPE, Monte Carlo and MIPCOM. Markets in Australia and the Far East will also be on his busy schedule.

The pre-evening buyers' job was easier when they had access to the large American catalogue held by Beta Taurus. Now, it seems the Leo Kirch company is no longer selling series to the public networks, but saving them for SAT 1, the commercial channel in which Kirch is a major partner. A source in the ARD acquisition apparatus who asked not to be named, said to *TV World*: "He doesn't offer them to us any more. He has simply stopped approaching us." ■

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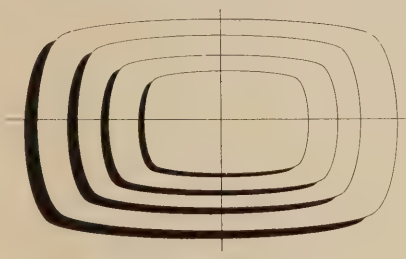
ZDF (Josef Göhlen) at +49 6131 701. Telex: 41879356. Fax: +49 6131 72855.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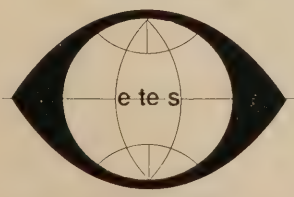

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RIAS reaches out

A new news channel kicks off, Bill Peterson reports.

AUGUST 22 is the big day for Berlin's brand-new television outlet RIAS-TV. After a year of preparation it will commence live daily broadcasting from the shiny new studios in the morning and early evening on channel 25, the frequency occupied until now only by commercial station SAT 1.

Far from being a local station for Berlin, RIAS' primary target audience will be the potential six million viewers in East Berlin and the large portion of East Germany reached by its transmitter. Conceived as a pure information and news outlet, RIAS' goal is to satisfy the thirst for objective news and information by viewers in the East. According to TV Director Garhard Besserer, the four hours of live programming every day will far outstrip what is available to viewers in East Germany from West German channels ARD and ZDF.

The TV outlet is a natural growth of RIAS radio. The name stands for Radio in the American Sector. It was founded in 1946 by American military authorities to provide vital information for the citizens of the war-torn city. Long known for its cultural and intellectual programming, RIAS Radio also operates a hot American-sounding pop channel reaching both Berlins. Like its radio cousin, RIAS-TV is funded directly by the government of the Federal Republic of German and the United States, and is officially operated by the United States Information Agency. Thus it's easy to imagine it is to be a sort of propaganda outlet.

This is hotly denied by Gerhard Besserer. "Our prime criteria will be new and interesting information," he points out. "We would carry the Russian TV view of Afghanistan, for instance. Any view is valid, including strong opinion, as long as it's identified."

Naturally RIAS-TV will also command a news-orientated audience in West Berlin, where it will be carried on cable as well as over the air. Cable carriage in West Germany is under study by the Constitutional Court, because regulations do not permit broadcasting funded by the state. Berlin, still officially an occupied city, comes under special rules. Commercial broadcasting groups have also protested the founding of RIAS-TV, seeing it as an encroachment on their turf. "We are new in the market," says Besserer, "And if we're successful, we'll command our share of it. There are plenty of people who will watch a strong news and information station. But we will not be depending on ratings."

RIAS will focus on a CNN-style breakfast show from 06.00 until 08.30 hours. The entertainment flourishes of SAT 1 and RTL Plus, the only competition in this daypart, will be absent. "We'll not be mixing in music clips with the news and current affairs," says Besserer. "And, unlike the US networks, we are staying away from talking heads," he says.

From 08.30 until 09.00. RIAS will broadcast a feature documentary.

The daily evening broadcast from 17.50 to 20.30 will be purely international, national, and Berlin news. To keep up to the minute, RIAS has established studios in Bonn and Washington and will take feeds from WTN, Visnews, and the EBU.

The staff will swell to 200 once they are in full operation, but this will never be enough to produce the amount of material they need. Thus RIAS intends to give out plenty of work to independent producers and to rely on the world market for imported material.

"We're a market for all sorts of documentary and information programming," says Acquisitions officer Harro Zimmer. RIAS will also purchase magazine shows from which they can pull two or three minute items. "We don't pay rates as high as ARD and ZDF and we don't acquire rights for all of Germany. Our rates are comparable to those paid by Austria, or perhaps a single West German Third Channel station." Zimmer wants to see screening cassettes rather than paper-work, and does not seem afraid to deal with a flood of offers.

Zimmer estimates he has already bought about 250 hours or programming. He still needs plenty to satisfy the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly needs of an outlet which will not be able to throw in soaps, movies or game shows to fill in the hours. ■

Contact Harro Zimmer Tel. +49 30 469-9255, Fax +49 30 463-1998, Telex 186 601 RIATV D.

LIVE and all linked-up

LIVE is going places. The young dynamic Berlin company founded and run by 29 year old Christoph Bruessel seems to be one to watch.

Until July, LIVE's name was linked with Munich's Eureka TV, a national cable/satellite channel whose original goal was to create a news and information channel for Germany. LIVE had a delivery contract to supply a daily video package. Using its network of correspondents in five cities, LIVE is in a position to cover the entire country. Eureka, however, went off in its own direction – Teleshopping and American soaps – and Bruessel felt the concept of a news channel had been buried. It looked to him like Eureka was going nowhere, fast. He decided LIVE was better off on its own and parted with Eureka on July 1.

The agency has not been short of work. It covers news events every day and sells the coverage to a range of stations. It produced a 90 minute evening gala for ARD, and is developing concepts for feature documentaries and series and for music broadcasts to fully utilise its resources. In addition LIVE's division SPOTLIVE, a national advertising production company, is also performing well.

Now counting about 70 engaged and 30 freelance employees, the firm has only been in business four years. Bruessel said he started LIVE after attempting to build a cooperative of freelancers in Bonn. He couldn't get the freelancers together, so instead he founded a company to employ their services and sell the result to the stations. At that time his sole market was the public stations. When private radio and TV began to get on its feet, LIVE was prepared to serve them too.

Bruessel is casting envious eyes on the North Rhine Westphalia broadcasting license, not sure if LIVE is ready to go after it. "Those transmitters will get 15 million viewers right away, more than the entire cable system, but I'm not sure we have the strength yet to get into it."

One of Bruessel's pet projects is a proper, CNN-style national news and information-channel with a 10-minute cycle, which he says he could bring off for about DM 20 million (US$11.11 million) a year. "The correspondents will cost from six to eight million marks. The editorial section will only cost about three million. The rest would go for technical and administration expenses. We already have the studios and equipment. This is a concrete plan we are fully prepared to pursue if we get an investor." ■

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TV WORLD THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE THAT MEANS BUSINESS

TV starts taking

Medical programmes cut through demographic barriers more successfully than most. Peter Broderick reports on a new strain of reality show set to start this autumn.

TIRED and listless? Overweight? Constipated? Stay tuned . . .

Starting this fall, doctors will be regularly diagnosing these and more serious problems in homes across the United States. Each weekday five or six new patients will be seen visiting medical centres, where they will be interviewed and examined by physicians who will explain what is wrong and recommend a course of treatment. Television will take millions of viewers behind closed doors to witness the customarily confidential encounters between doctors and patients.

While the fall premiers of *Group One Medical* and *Family Medical Center* will mark the emergence of a new programming genre, it is one rooted in popular genres with impressive track records. Since the 1950's, many drama series featuring doctors have done well-from *Dr. Kildare* and *Ben Casey*,to *Marcus Welby, M.D.* and *St.Elsewhere*. Among the most frequent topics of made-for-television movies have been "diseases of the week." Almost no illness has been left untouched: AIDS *(An Early Frost)*, Alzheimer's disease *(Do You Remember Love?)*, breast cancer *(First You Cry* and *The Ann Jillian Story)*, cystic fibrosis *(Alex: The Life of a Child)*, bulima *(Kate's Secret)*, and even herpes *(Intimate Agony)*. All of these conditions, as well as many others, have attracted large audiences.

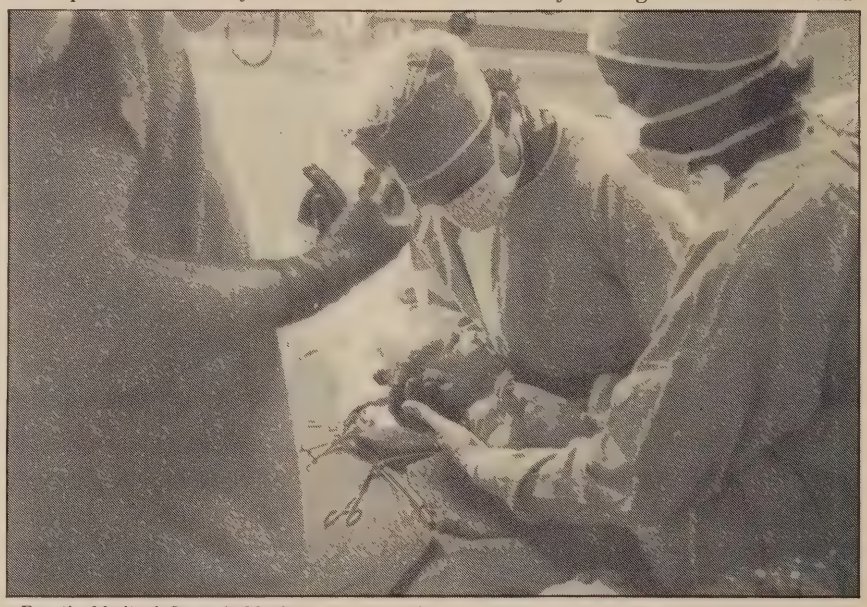
Over the years, timely medical topics have been used as an ingredient in a variety of programmes to achieve higher ratings. Promoting such topics in advance on shows ranging from *Good Morning America* to *Donahue* can be very effective. Medical stories have been used particularly successfully to attract viewers to news programmes. According to television news consultant Harvey Gersin, "In virtually all of our studies concerning television news features, medical information ranks highest among all possible subjects. Medical information's number one ranking is with both older and younger viewers, and transcends all socio-economic groups." A recent survey of television news directors by McHugh and Hoffman, ranked health and medical stories as the most promotable subject matter, and indicated that medical reports were very important as a newscast topic.

However, the single most important predecessors to *Group One Medical* and *Family Medical Center* are legal rather than medical. These new shows are most closely modeled on the reality-based court shows: *The People's Court, Superior Court, Divorce Court,* and *The Judge* (see *TV World,* March/April 1988).

Family Medical Center and *Group One Medical* have both invoked the success of the court shows in their sales materials, and are following their example in several ways. Like the court shows, the new medical shows will be syndicated half-hours shown five days a week. The court shows have been quite successful in early fringe, which is the time period at which the medical shows are targeted. The court shows have been among the most effective counter-programming to talk shows such as *Oprah,* and have been widely used as news lead-ins. The medical shows are also designed to work well as news lead-ins (especially given the interest of news viewers in medical topics), and the distributors of the medical series hope they will be effective as counter-programming to the talk shows, and presumably the court shows as well.

During the first years of the court shows, there was a certain amount of head-to-head competition, as rival series were scheduled against each other. More recently, they have successfully been scheduled in "court blocks," during which two in the first season of *Group One Medical* and *Family Medical Center* there will be "medical blocks" since approximately 30 stations have so far purchased both series.

Among the other ways in which the medical shows will emulate the court shows is by mixing entertainment and information. It is essential that the shows be entertaining enough to keep viewers watching and coming back for more. The reality base serves to make the drama more compelling.



'Family Medical Center': Marks emergence of a new programming genre.

Another thing that the medical shows have learned from their courtroom predecessors is the importance of resolving problems within a single episode. Like *The People's Court,* on which two cases are argued and decided each day, the medical shows will present two or three medical problems every episode, resolving the vast majority of them in a single programme.

"What the producers of *The People's Court* did with everyday legal problems in 1981, they'll do with everyday medical problems in 1988" — so goes the promotional literature for *Family Medical Center*. Its production company — Ralph Edwards/Stu Billett Productions — also produces *Superior Court. Family Medical Center's* executive producer Jay Feldman is also co-

the treatment

executive producer of *Superior Court*. Feldman explained that *Family Medical Center* is more complicated and time-consuming to shoot than *Superior Court* and the other court series. Many more sets representing different parts of a doctor's office are required than for the court series, where most of the action takes place in a single courtroom. In addition, Feldman indicated that *Family Medical Center* will be shot in a much more realistic style, integrating hand-held camera shots to give more of a docudrama feel. While six half-hour episodes of *Superior Court* are shot in one day, it is only possible to shoot three episodes of *Family Medical Center* in a single day.

The series will show what happens when individuals go to a family medical center (a private practice staffed by a group of doctors) to have their problems diagnosed and treated. All of the doctors and patients will be played by actors, and every episode will be completely scripted. According to Feldman, all of the cases will be dramatisations of actual cases. Whether fictional or real, cases on the series will combine "interesting diseases with human stories," explained Feldman. Typically, a human problem will present an obstacle which must be overcome before the medical problem can be resolved:

- a man comes in to be treated for injuries; the doctor realises that he is a battered husband, and that his relationship with his wife must change to prevent further injuries;
- a pregnant woman must decide whether to undergo foetal surgery; her husband, who is unhappy with her pregnancy, argues that she should have an abortion;
- a woman with MS must decide whether to tell her fiance about her disease before they are married.

In such situations, both doctors and patients must wrestle with human as well as medical problems.

Scott Carlin, President of First Run Sales for Lorimar Syndication, which is distributing *Family Medical Center,* explained that the key is "to produce a show that people will watch five days a week and look forward to watching." Describing the feel of *Family Medical Center* as "upbeat" and "affirmative." Jay Feldman explained that the show will focus on "problems that are solvable," and "cases where there is hope." He did indicate, however, that occasionally someone will die, as in the case of a cancer patient who decides to end his chemotherapy treatment. Another source connected with the programme acknowledged that in order to be realistic, it will be necessary "to sprinkle some death and disease" among the episodes, but indicated that this will be done very carefully.

Produced by Sauter/Piller/Percelay Productions (Van Gordon Sauter was formerly president of the CBS Broadcast Group) in association with MGM/UA Telecommunications, Inc., *Group One Medical* is similar in many ways to Family Medical Center. In each episode, patients will tell doctors about their medical problems and then be diagnosed. A very broad range of medical problems will be dealt with on both series — from constipation and hiccups to AIDS and leukimia. Life-threatening

'Group One Medical': Features real doctors in unscripted encounters.

conditions will be in a distinct minority (approximately one out of 18 cases on *Group One Medical*). Medical problems with solutions will be emphasised.

Each show's team of three primary physicians will include a black and a woman (*Family Medical Center* will feature a black woman doctor), and there will be a sexual and racial mix among the patients on both series. This diversity reflects an awareness of the heterogeneous audiences at which the shows are aimed.

Beyond the similarities, there are fundamental differences between the series. *Group One Medical* will feature real doctors in unscripted encounters with real patients concerning their actual medical problems. The differences require contrasting approaches to the production process. Instead of casting actors to play the doctors, the producers of *Group One Medical* conducted an extensive search for the right physicians. *Group One Medical* producer Craig Haffner and his co-workers interviewed 170 doctors, but were frustrated to find so many doctors "with impeccable credentials who could never modulate themselves off the 'I'm always calm' level." Eventually they selected three doctors able to move in a wider emotional range, even though they didn't fit TV doctor stereotypes like "the brash young intern and the scholarly mentor."

Finding the right patients required an extensive search to locate individuals willing and able to explain their problems on camera. Of the first 300 who were seen, 130 were used. Every patient selected to be on *Group One Medical* must be under the care of a primary physician. Most of the patients selected have had their particular medical problems previously diagnosed by their own doctors. According to Dr. Ron Pion (medical consultant to *Group One Medical*), the diagnoses of the doctors on the series are usually in support of those diagnoses already made by the patients' own physicians. He explained that "patients come on the show in order to share something with a large audience, hoping that it may help others to be spared." Pion gave the example of a victim of a heart attack who hoped that his appearance on the show would encourage others with potential heart problems to have their cholestrol levels checked.

Because the encounters between doctors and patients are shot with four cameras in real time, the only way to handle patients who require further monitoring or treatment over an extended period of time is to feature them in subsequent episodes.

Even when a case continues over several episodes, "each episode will have a certain closure — a number of medical questions having been answered," explained Haffner. Unlike *Group One Medical,* which is produced in real time, *Family Medical Center,* which is scripted, will be able to compress an extended period of treatment (whether over a month or a year) into a single episode.

The contrasting approaches taken by *Family Medical Center* and *Group One Medical* mirror differences among the court shows. *The People's Court* uses real litigants, a real judge (no longer on the bench), and real cases, while *The*

continued on p22 ▶

TV taking the treatment

► continued from p21

Judge uses actors playing roles in completely fictional cases. The critical choice is between greater control and greater realism. *Family Medical Center* opted for control. As Scott Carlin noted, "we chose not to leave ourselves at the mercy of reality." He believes that viewers are used to the "formulaic rhythms" of sit coms and dramas. According to *Family Medical Center's* Feldman, "I'm glad to have control. In the early afternoon, people want to see a show that has a beginning and an end, and is dramatically satisfying."

The producers of *Group One Medical* have chosen greater realism, believing that what they may give up in control will be more than made up for by the dramatic impact and unpredictability of real life cases. While acknowledging that not every interaction between patients and doctors on *Group One Medical* will be highly dramatic, Haffner emphasized that the "clutching, dramatic moments" will really have an impact. Since the series has been in production, at least one patient whose case the series has followed has died. In such situations, Haffner explained, it is emotionally very tough to work on the show, "because it's not make-believe."

By early July 1988, each series had achieved substantial domestic coverage. *Family Medical Center* had been sold in 100 US markets, with a coverage of about 76 per cent. This included 18 of the top 20 markets (NBC O & O's in Cleveland and Washington, D.C., and the CBS O & O in Chicago). Scott Carlin guessed that 60 per cent of the stations would run the series in daytime, and the other 40 per cent in early fringe.

According to Dick Cignarelli (Executive Vice-President, Domestic Syndication, MGM/UA Telecommunications, Inc.), *Group One Medical* had been sold in 97 US markets, with a 76 per cent coverage. This included 19 of the top 20 markets (and all seven NBC O & O's). He noted that 90 of the stations which have purchased *Group One Medical* are owned by of affiliated with CBS, NBC or ABC. He estimated that the series would be scheduled in 50 per cent of the markets in daytime, and the other 50 per cent in early fringe.

Cignarelli believes that the response has been so good to *Group One Medical* because of its potential for advertisers. He explained that "the value of the show is that it allows the sales force to go to new advertisers. It offers an environment for advertisers that didn't exist before." Carlin characterised the stations' reaction to *Family Medical Center* as "inordinately optimistic and upbeat."

So far, there has been a remarkably similar response to both series. Domestically not only are the percentages of coverage identical and the number of markets approximately the same, but 30 stations have purchased both. Foreign sales are also similar. So far both series have only been sold to Canada and Australia. According to Jeff Schlesinger, Senior Vice President, International, Lorimar International, "While there is not at the moment a tremendous interest in reality programming abroad, we are trying to build it. I don't know whether the breakthrough will be on the court front or the medical front."

For better of worse, the fates of the two series seem to be closely linked. *Group One Medical's* Craig Haffner sees their commonality of interest, and "believes that there is room in the marketplace for both." According to *Family Medical Center's* Feldman, "one show is a show, two shows are a genre. If we succeed, they succeed." ■

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Start of a Kiwi price war?

One of the lowest-paying countries may be forced to increase its prices, Lyn Williamson reports.

A MAJOR row has erupted between TVNZ and TV3 executives over maximum prices for the purchase of overseas programmes.

In spite of meetings between TVNZ director-general Julian Mounter and TV3 Chief Executive Tom Parkinson the issue remains unresolved.

Until TV3 picks up its warrant to begin operating next year it can legally outbid TVNZ for overseas programme and is currently doing so.

"Competition, that's the name of the game!" says TV3 programmer Kel Geddes. "We are in the business to be ahead of our competition. We are offering an injection of excitement and energy in a market which has been depressed for the past 25 years."

TV3 is deliberately making no plans to pick up its warrant until just before March 31 when it is scheduled to go on air and remains hopeful that the Broadcasting Act, which is currently under Government review, following the recently announced deregulation of the broadcasting industry, will do away with price fixing anyway.

"We will do everything in our power to avoid a price war because in the end everyone will suffer"

"Obviously at the end of the day we can outbid TV3," says TVNZ's manager of public affairs Aline Sandilands, "but we do not want to get into that situation.

"There is plenty of product out there – more than enough to feed three networks. It's in both TVNZ and TV3's interests to come to a base line agreement and then if there are particular programmes we both want we can agree to differ, but let's not get into a totally haphazard and unncessary price war."

Julian Mounter says: "We will do everything in our power to avoid a price war because in the end everyone will suffer. It has to be remembered that New Zealand is a small country and overseas suppliers do quite well out of New Zealand. We buy 5,000 hours from them. If there is a price war we believe the whole financial structure will be damaged.

"While distributors will reap the benefit now, in the long term they too will suffer because two or three strong services have to be better than two or three weak ones.

"If there is to be a battle, TVNZ has the support of a large number of suppliers which has been built up over many years because we pay honourable prices which are in excess of those countries of similar population."

TVNZ pays approximately $US1,500 an hour for its programmes (usually less for children's and more for drama) and feels this compares well with countries such as Ireland, which has a larger population but lower viewing figures.

While a full scale price war is no doubt welcomed by most distributors, many people in the New Zealand industry are concerned about the ramifications it will have on programme quality and the money left over at the end of the day by both TVNZ and TV3, to put into local production.

John Barnett, president of the Independent Producers and Directors Guild has come out very much on the side of TVNZ in spite of the rocky relationship between TVNZ and the independent programme makers in the past.

"TVNZ and TV3 both agree that it is local programming which creates a network's profile but the truth is that it takes a long time to produce something. The fact that buyers can go to a market in LA, Monte Carlo or Cannes and make up their minds immediately about whether or not to buy a programme is a lot easier that actually going through the pains of giving birth to it," says Barnet.

TVNZ emphasise that unless the Government increases its funding there is only so much money available and higher overseas prices will mean a reduction in local programme making.

"We are currently paying out $20 (US$13.52 million) to $30 (US)20.28 million) million in overseas product," says Sandilands, "and this provides us with 70 per cent of our programming. Conversely we are spending about $70 (US$47.32 million) million on locally made programmes which provides us with 30 per cent of our programming.

"The cake is only so big and if overseas product is going to cost more it is local programmes which will suffer," she warns.

But TV3 argue that the price war can only push up local production.

"I look at TVNZ's record at the present time," he says "BCNZ claim to have made $NZ30 million (US$20.28 million) profit but where has all that paid off in terms of local production? They don't showcase New Zealand actors because they (the actors) would come along and want more money. TV3 intend to push up local production."

"We are in the business to be ahead of our competition. We are offering an injection of excitement and energy in a market that has been depressed for 25 years."

Much of TVNZ's profit has gone into building its state-of-the-art Network Centre in Auckland and in modernising its existing facilities, but it also puts out 2,300 hours of local production. Most of this comes from the Corporation's own production facilities but it is increasingly turning to local production houses to fill the holes in its schedule.

"TVNZ's $NZ30 million profit would very quickly disappear if there was a price war," says John Barnett. "I think that both TV3 and TVNZ will lose out as a result, and the public too. The networks will not be buying anymore programmes but they will be paying more for them."

John Barnett estimates that TVNZ and TV3 will net $NZ250 (US$169 million) million in advertising revenue.

"If among them they end up spending around $80 (US$54) million in off-shore programme purchasing, before they have even started employing anybody, they will all be out of business." ■

Where have all the children gone?

Nowhere. They're just not our children any more, mourn broadcasters who used to be electronic babysitters for kids now watching programmes delivered by video tape recorders, reports Arnold J Friedman

ALTHOUGH angry executives at US networks and distribution companies continue to challenge the numbers, Nielsen's people metre surveys earlier this year reported that last year about 28 per cent of the children's audience defected.

What cannot be questioned is the drop in advertising spending, estimated at about seven per cent. And what is not contested is that children, in *some* number, have turned away from the scheduled programming.

Since Nielsen reports no change in television *usage* for children 2-11, this doesn't exactly mean they are turning away from their television screens; only that they are discovering an alternative delivery system called video tape.

Just 10 per cent of all children watching television are 2-11. Older children are slipping away too. Teens 12-17 show a drop of ten per cent, mostly in the 15:00 to 18:00 time periods.

Whether or not the service is under-reporting these Lost Children (ABC-TV director of children's programming Squire Rushnell called it "irresponsible reporting") the children's share of the total prerecorded videocassette market was up about 35 per cent last year over 1986. This according to Leslie Grey, assistant vice president and executive editor of *Home Video Publisher*. Grey told *TV World* that the US$260-280 million wholesale revenues realised on children's units in 1987 represents only nine per cent of the US$3 billion total volume.

Lest her "only" negates the significance of these kids, look at it this way: in a universe of about 80 million television homes, we're talking about 22.7 million cassettes that chidlren watch over and over – on their televison screens. This means they're not watching the systems that deliver broadcast and cable programming. That's the loss. That's where all the children went.

Lorimar Syndication, which has a serious vested interest in broadcast television for children (*ThunderCats, SilverHawks, The Comic Strip*) earlier this year completed its own three month market study to determine why the children's audience is eroding in early fringe time.

"We've seen kids moving away from television altogether," said Dick Robertson at the time. A member of the Office of the President at Lorimar Telepictures Corporation, he added, "Increased availability of kids' cassettes, combined with ever increasing VCR penetration (*almost 60 per cent now – Editor*) and the emergence in popularity of home video technology are just some of the reasons for this problem."

Among other reasons, as Robertson and the rest of the industry have perceived, is a change of attitude that inclines children toward live action and softer, family-based animation instead of toward action-adventure strips that had become a glut on the market. Lorimar is changing direction for future episodes of current animated programmes, *ThunderCats* in particular, Robertson said. In the fall he launches *Fun House*, a five-day-a-week live action game show for children.

In the mean time, Lorimar Home Video signed a long-term agreement with Muppets creator Jim Henson to produce a series of sell-through tapes on a *Jim Henson Play-Along Video* label. Six made-for-video half hours will be released September 7, featuring familiar Muppet characters and some new ones created especially for the new tapes. They encourage children to use their own creativity and imagination and are interactive in the sense that kids participate in a variety of fun activities that build self-esteem and confidence.

The Henson label is the fourth to distribute children's product for Lorimar. Their Kideo Video line, a joint venture with LBS Communications and DIC Animation City, distributes *Care Bears, MASK, Inspector Gadget, Gobots* and *The Get Along Gang*. Scholatic Lorimar draws on the sizeable resources of Scholastic Productions (National Scholastic). Lorimar Home Video includes the *Alvin the Chipmunk* animated cartoons and a recently released series of live-action half hours based on the best selling *Ramona* children's books.

However, Lorimar's videotape division has reported serious losses, attributed to mismanagement by a team no longer with the company, and plans for the troubled division are not clear. Industry insiders speculate that the Lorimar videotape units will be phased out and absorbed by Warners' own home video company.

Under whichever banner they go, there are some promising new ventures involving character licenses. These include a series based on the Gymboree chain of children's workout centres and related exercise toys – and another tie-in with Colorforms to produce a *Learn 'N' Play* series of half hours. Last year Lorimar's successful *Care Bears* television series spun off to home video in a 75 minute *Family Treasure Chest* tape.

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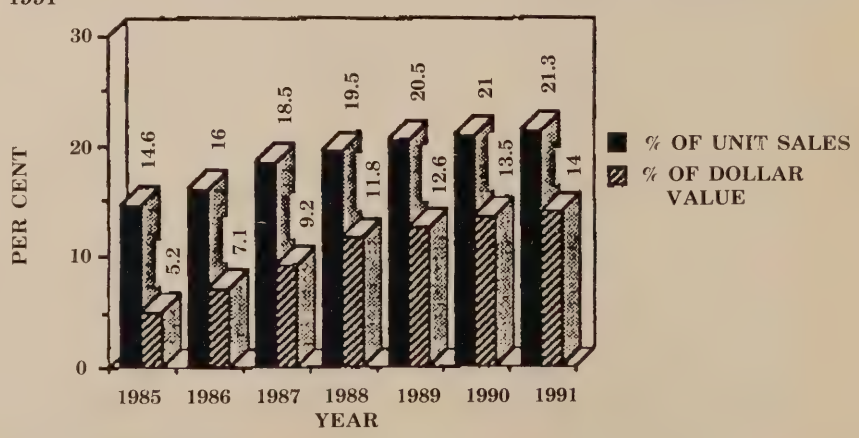
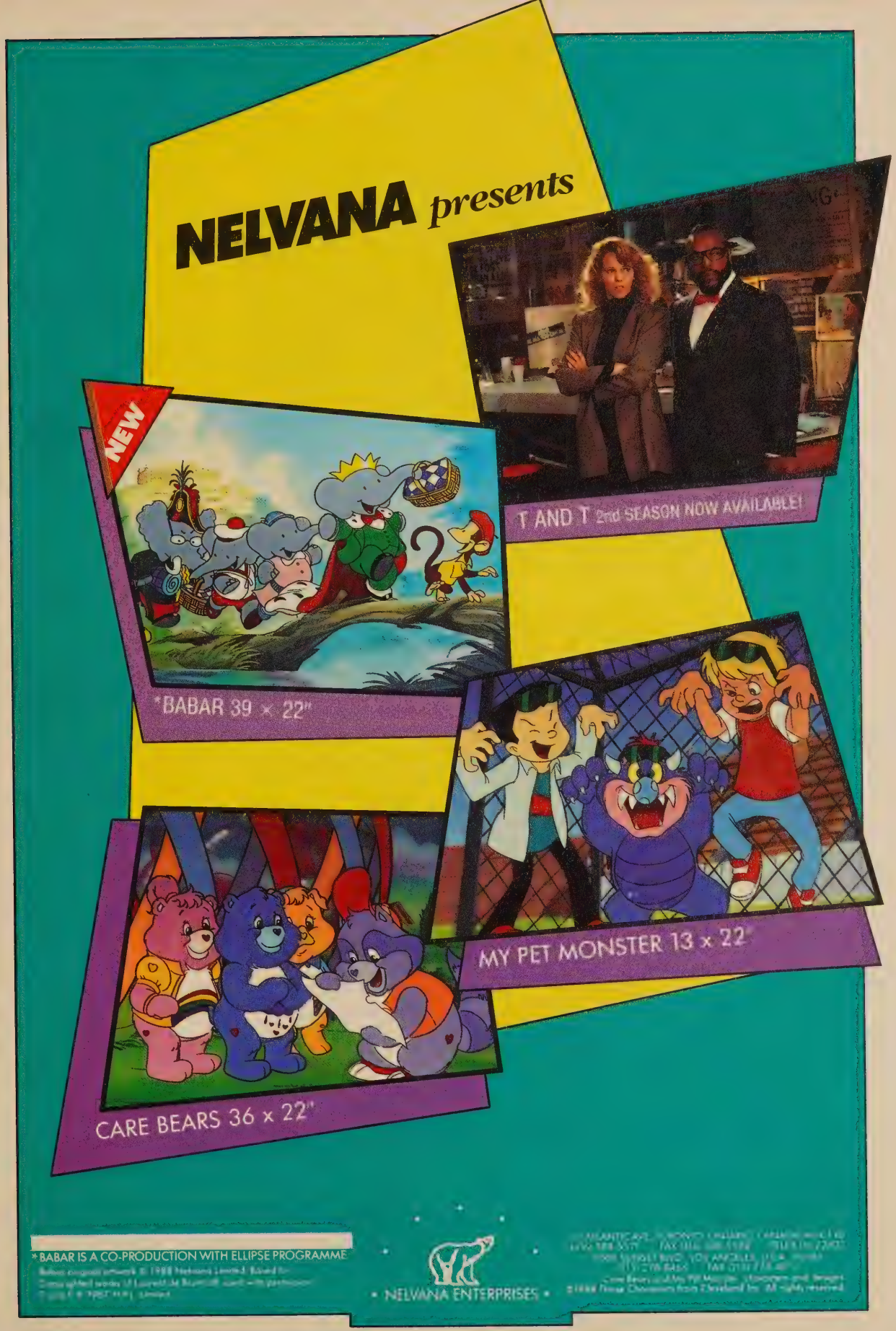
Children's videocassette sales as per cent of industry wide totals, 1987 to 1991



Source: Video Marketing.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Where are the children

► continued from p24

Other companies have also put crossover exposure to work for them.

New World Video licensed use of the Fisher-Price logo with a special tape-and-book packaging release of the toy company's *Little People* line.

"We don't have the brand license," David Pierce, New World's vp/sales & marekting, told *TV World*. "The distinction is that Fisher-Price previously licensed its brand name to Hi Tops Video and now has licensed use of the logo to us. We use it on the books packaged with the cassettes."

The books are printed by the publishing division of Marvel Entertainment, which was acquired by New World. Hi Tops, in turn, is a subsidiary of Heron Communications, which also owns Media Home Entertainment and Fox Hills Video. Heron is a high-roller in cross-promotions, which include World of Wonders' *Teddy Ruxpin;* Mattel's *Barbie* and *Captain Power*.

International Video Entertainment doubled its revenues last year and formed a three year deal with Tonka Corporation to launch a new children's video label. Tonka, a heavyweight toymaker heavily active in broadcast television (*Pound Puppies, Gobots,* others) may be rechanneling its syndication dollars because of changes in the marketplace. Among these are the trend away from action-adventure animated series and impending legislation that could restrict advertising time for toy-driven programmes.

Although Orbis Communications, a syndication company with other children's properties, has been acquired by IVE's parent, Carolco Pictures, the Tonka deal was for network, videocassette and perhaps theatrical release. And DIC Enterprises formed a video label with Western Publishing, for videos based on its line of Golden Books. Hi-Tops Video continues to distribute *Barbie* cassettes, featuring the Mattel line of classic dolls.

This trend to character licensing, familiar in other entertainment venues, was established in the then nascent home video market in 1983. Family Home Entertainment acquired home video rights to *Strawberry Shortcake,* a doll cum cartoon character successfully marketed elsewhere.

However, the company that wrote the book on character licensing in the early '30s, with an anthropomorphic mouse, is still leader of the pack. In fact, this year *Mickey Mouse* celebrates his 60th birthday with a 12-month series of worldwide parties and events. Then among the 35 new cassettes expected to be released by the end of the year there will be a new featurette hosted by Disney's first and most famous star and featuring *Sorcerer's Apprentice* sequences from the landmark *Fantasia* movie – scenes never seen on videotape.

For parents, grandparents and older siblings of today's children – who think they have discovered Disney – there has always been Disney. The name equates with quality and top-of-the-line. Disney characters and product are so well known from massive exposure in all other media for such a long time that by the time they got to home video the market was pre-sold.

Widest distribution

"We have been given a gift, here," Carol Black, vp/worldwide marketing for Buena Vista Television, told *TV World*. Disney owns over half the US sales dollar. Both Touchstone and Walt Disney Home Video are under Black's Buena Vista umbrella and the company with the Disney name logically is the one that markets what Black calls family, not children's, tapes. They have the widest distribution of any product in the home video market and in addition to mass merchandising and other methods, Disney tapes are sold through about 70,000 domestic outlets, she said.

An estimated US$25 million will be spent on Disney's Christmas campaign, including the share from Proctor & Gamble, with which Disney has this year's corporate tie-in. It's a sweepstakes promotion for the latest in an ongoing *Sing Along Songs* series. You read that right. The marketing budget is 25 *million*. Dollars. The media buy includes network, television, radio, print – with heavy national magazine exposure – free standing inserts and other point-of-purchase material as well as the rest of the promotional bag of tricks. Lat year Disney did similar promos with the National Dairy Association and the McDonalds fast food chain. In turn, consumers have spent a larger fortune on Disney product: an estimated US$140 million last year.

Black commented that at her US$29.95 price point "We have to sell three and a half to four times as much to reach the same profit levels, but we know we will." This Christmas Disney will offer Mini-Classics (featurettes) at its lowest price point of US$14.95. So far, *Lady and the Tramp* is not only the all time largest selling children's tape, it is the largest selling tape in any category, she says, topping *Top Gun*.

According to *Home Video Publisher*, an industry newsletter, *Lady's* wholesale revenue at last count is US$60.4 million. *Sleeping Beauty* is the second top selling children's videocassette, at US$39.6 million. MCA's *An American Tail* is third, but on A C Nielsen's top five survey, *Tail* is second to *Lady* with *Sleeping Beauty* third.

This Christmas Black is taking *Cinderella* to the ball as her lead title. Following a longtime Disney tradition, it will be on the market for just one selling season, she said, then withdrawn for seven years. However, Disney has lately been known to relent from the theatrical warehousing of its *untouchables,* as they are called. Classics like *Sleeping Beauty* may be awakened sooner than planned as the home video market expands and competition increases. The market is expected to expand from nine per cent of the wholesale revenue to 14 per cent in 1991, according to Video Marketing, which puts the US dollar figure at 585 million then, up from the US$280 million 1987 pie.

Hanna-Barbera, which has already taken a big bite out of that pie, will by now have made an announcement jointly with Worldvision that from now on the company will trade on the famous name by releasing everything on its own Hanna-Barbera Home Video label. Previously about 2,000 hours of H-B animation have been distributed in 42 countries by Worldvision Home Video. Both companies are subsidiaries of Great American Broadcasting Company. Tom Devlin, vp/general manager of Worldwide Home Video, will also have that title and the same responsibilities with the new Hanna-Barbera label.

A brand new anthology series called *Personal Favourites* will be released by Christmas – for rental only. Among them will be first episodes of Yogi Bear (so far only Yogi Bear *movies* have been released to home video) and short subjects that go back to 1958, including Ruff & Reddy, the first television effort on their own after leaving the famous MGM theatrical studios in Hollywood.

This month Hanna-/Barbera will release more tapes, including *Wally Gator, Jabberjaw* and the eighth in their *Creation* bible series now sold in 64 international markets. They are pricing down from US$19.95 to $14.95, which is the trend to encourage sell-through.

Since studios and distributors don't share rental revenues with retailers,

selling them a few units of each title is like selling books to libraries and schools (which are also cassette markets). An early strategy was to charge prices as high as US$79.95 and US$89.95 for "A" movies. But it's still early in the game and the name of it may turn out to be Volume. Now wholesale prices are coming down to stimulate the sell-through market, which is price-driven.

The prices of children's videos, which have always been less, are even lower today with features down from US$59.95 to $39.95 and now US$29.95. Shorter tapes go for under US$10.00 and as noted even Disney has accepted the US$14.95 price point for some tapes. Because production costs for most children's units have long since been recouped, at least theoretically, rental and sell-through revenues need only cover costs of duplicating, packaging and marketing the tapes. What's left over determines whether the business is non-profit. Some companies bypass stores entirely and deal directly with mass merchants and jobbers who offer consumers discount prices and make it up in volume.

There's a little more to it but basically that's the idea. The *Catch 22* is that smaller operations must be cautious about overspending on sales promotion and advertising, but without enough exposure the product goes unnoticed among the thousands on the market. Some ingenuity is needed to make the most of what budgets can be allocated.

'Denver The Last Dinosaur': TV exposure before HV release.

For example, Westchester Films has begun to release its classic *Star Blazers* action/adventure series two at a time on one-hour cassettes. Full page, four colour ads are running only in *Starlog*, a science-fiction publication, and *Comis Scene*, another speciality book, in which Westchester president Claude Hill expects to find his target viewers. The first two half hours are on the market now and mail order response is satisfactory, said Hill, but not overwhelming.

His deal is with newly formed Kidmark, Inc., which has one international mail order price of US$14.95 for the first two episodes. The offer includes membership in the International Star Blazers Video Fan Club and a membership card.

In a separate agreement, Hill has assigned home video distribution rights to Family Express Video for *Max, the 2000 Year Old Mouse*, a series of five-minute educational entertaining vignettes in which another mouse hosts trips into history, fifty of them celebrating America. It's for children 6 to 12 and sells slightly higher at US$16.95. The *Star Blazers* programmes skew to older children and Hill has kept the price down to encourage puchase of subsequent episodes in the series.

The charm of animation is that it can do anything. Whereas *Max the Mouse* takes his friends back in time 2000

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Judging the J

Munich's bi-annual children's festival is a time of laughter, tears and worthy messages, reports Alison Homewood

PRODUCING children's television is a tough job, for all its rewards. It takes special skills to communicate with young people, to remember what made us laugh and cry as children and to balance social lessons with lighter elements that keep a child watching.

For someone attending the Prix Jeunesse for the first time, the most striking impression is that everyone seems to know everyone else. Children's TV is a sector which attracts some of the most sincere, most committed people, who tend to stay in it for a long while – a fact which in itself must have important implications for children's programming. These executives inevitably make the bi-annual trek to Munich to attend the industry's premiere children's TV event, and have become rather like one large family.

Like any family, of course, they don't get along all time. During the group discussions which this time were held after every eight programmes – two in English, two in German and one in French – there were several heated discussions. And, apart from one political argument, these generally concerned a programme being too commercial, or in several cases, a show being too "worthy".

Seven of this year's winners: from l-r, representatives from Denmark, UK, Norway, Belgium, Sweden, Holland and West Germany.

The festival is divided into four categories; information, entertainment, animation and drama. Sixty five TV organisations from 48 countries submitted a total of 98 programmes. New entrants were Cyprus, Luxembourg, Mali, The Philippines, Zaire and Zimbabwe, while first-time observers came along from Angola, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bahrain, Vietnam, Benin and Djibouti.

While the entries in the information section (28) and the drama category (30) were praised for being of an overall very high standard, the entertainment section was slammed for its generally low-grade entries. *Double Dare,* from US cable channel Nickelodeon, caused particular controversy in the discussion groups. The show, which is very successful in the US, and whose format has been acquired by the BBC, is a lively game show featuring two teams competing to answer questions on pop culture, school or multiple choice, and if they fail, undergoing physical challenges such as climbing up a chocolate slide or jumping on oatmeal filled balloons with their legs tied together. For every dare completed successfully, they win a prize.

Undesirable materialism

Although the fun content and production standards of *Double Dare* were appreciated, many producers felt it encourages an undesirable materialism in children. The African representatives were very offended by the show's wanton waste of food.

The winner of this category, *Class Wars* from BRT Belgium, was from an eight-part series of humorous sketches joined together by the classroom situation – a backdrop which, judging by Prix Jeunesse entries, is still the most popular.

The most popular new theme seemed to be racial integration, and the

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eunesse

programmes attempting to cover the problems therein were some of the most successful. The programme which received the highest number of votes across all categories – and the most tears – was an outstanding information entry *Children of South Africa* from VPRO Holland. Filmmaker Trudy van Keulen went to South Africa to talk to both black and white children about their lives in a country where more than 8,000 children have been jailed, injured and killed.

Also praised was the NRK Norway's information entry *Do You Know Tung?* which covered a day in the life of four children newly arrived in Norway from Vietnam, Chile, Pakistan and the Gambia.

The one award not made this year was that for Outstanding Programme Made by a Broadcaster with Limited Means, and that may well have been due to the fact that several of the third world countries are trying, admirably, to make more ambitious programmes which however, aren't quite hitting the mark yet.

Indeed, a programme which received one of the strongest reactions of the festival was *The Social Statement,* a drama from ZBC Zimbabwe. The story centres on a young girl resented and badly-treated by her step-mother to the extent that the stepmother goes to a witchdoctor for a poison which will kill her. The plan goes wrong, and the stepmother dies by her own hand, leaving the daughter – who doesn't understand what has happened – tormented by guilt that she is responsible. What is disturbing about the programme is that there are no sympathetic adults to balance the story. The girl's father doesn't believe her, and her real mother, who does suspect something is wrong, is overruled by her husband. The communication between the adults was virtually non-existent, and where it did exist, was very violent. Delegates from ZBC maintained however that the show was very true to life, and had had a good deal of success in Zimbabwe where the programme had been intended to show the horrors of divorce and its effects on children.

Another profoundly shocking programme, but one which was carefully designed to reassure children that there are kind people who can be trusted, was Central TV's *A Couple of Charlies,* which won the UNICEF prize. It dealt with the growing problem of child abuse; lonely little Charlie's plight is paralleled through the story of a runt rabbit that he wants to adopt to save it from its parents' cruel treatment now they have another baby. He steals the rabbit and is beaten by his stepfather, but the children next door tell his teacher who takes charge of the situation. With a marvellous performance from the child actor playing Charlie, the programme – which was aired at 16.15 hours in the UK – was credited with being one of the first to bring child abuse to the public eye. Many of the participating countries, who also have growing child abuse problems, have already bought the programme.

Trivialising

Social realism was also strong in the CBC Canada entry *It's Late,* an episode from the series *Degrassi Junior High.* The episode centres around a 14 year-old girl who falls pregnant by a fellow student. The tone of the programme is upbeat and trendy and this

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Judging the Jeunesse

▶ continued from p29

seemed to disturb some producers, particularly the Scandinavians, who felt that the soap opera setting trivialised a serious issue. Others felt that, on the contrary, young people would be attracted by such a modern show and would therefore experience and, it is to be hoped, learn from the message.

Another programme dealing with the subject of young love was NRK Norway's *French Kiss* which won the prize for Best Programme Without Category. Anna has fallen in love, but never kissed properly before, although she pretends she has. The half-hour programme follows her determined efforts to do it, building up a dramatic tension which was much praised.

Much of the group discussion based around the cost of productions, particularly regarding NBC's entry, *Hans My Hedgehog* from *Jim Henson's The Storyteller*. Everyone loved the programme, but there seemed almost to be resentment amongst some producers that it had cost millions of dollars and taken nine months to make, and it perhaps may have been penalised in the voting because of this. It was compared with SVT's charming — but obviously much cheaper – drama entry *The Boy in the Oak Tree* about a boy who doesn't want to eat his peas, and dreams that he goes to live in oak trees. However, other delegates expressed the more sensible opinion that the industry is lucky that productions of the cost and quality of *The Storyteller* can be made, and that ultimately everyone benefits.

But Antenne 2 proved that money doesn't necessarily equate with quality. The French network entered a spoof western called *Rio Pueblo* which, judging by the number of actors — at least 15 — and the fairly elaborate set must have cost a centime or two, yet it was the only show where people actually walked out in droves. In the final discussion group, a West German producer called for it to be officially noted that the only country whose productions seemed not to have improved at all since the last Prix Jeunesse was France.

Central TV's 'A Couple of Charlies' and NBC's Hans My Hedgehog'.

Other points made for the administrators to consider was that countries not supplying fully translated materials should be disqualified, and that there should be tighter pre-competition selection, as there were some programmes which either did not seem to be in the right category, or which were not of sufficient quality to be included in the competition at all.

One widely-expressed opinion was that it is virtually impossible to judge an episode from a series with the same criteria as a one-off, and it looks likely that for the 1990 Prix Jeunesse, a new category for Mini-series and Continuing Series will be introduced.

This would have applied, for example, to this year's drama winner, Sullivan Films' wonderful production *Anne of Green Gables,* entered by WQED Pittsburgh. The programme, which has already sold widely overseas, is that rare thing — an adaptation that actually adds to the original novel. It also brought some much-needed laughs into the screening rooms — if there was an overriding feeling while watching it was that in the desire to put across "messages" to children, producers seemed to forget humour. It was difficult not to agree with the BBC producer who said: "Why can't someone write a comedy-thriller, where the kids actually do something wrong — and get away with it?"

As a business forum, the Prix Jeunesse seems effective, because many of the executives are powerful enough to agree to or reject immediately any new coproduction ideas. As a meeting place for new contacts, the warm and efficient environment created by the Prix Jeunesse coordinator Ursula Von Zallinger is very inducive. The voting system is efficient, the discussion groups stimulating and useful and overall the Prix Jeunesse is a model on which all festivals of this type should be based. ■

● **The full list of prizewinners was published in the June/July issue of *TV World***

Top-Selling Children's Home Video Titles in the UK

IN THE home video market worldwide, children's is proving to be one of the most bouyant areas, and within this category, sell-through, which can be risky for other genres, is definitely on the increase. This is mainly due to the value-for-money factor – children will happily watch a favurite programme over and over again, so making purchase of a title a viable investment for consumers. There is also present a very strong "nostalgia" element; parents or older relatives buying as presents for children programmes which they themselves watched when young.

COMPANY	TITLE	LENGTH	UNITS SOLD	PRICE
Virgin Video	*Rupert and the Frog*	18 mins	170,000	£7.99
VIP Video Gems	*Transformers the Movie*	90 mins	63,000*	£8.99
Film Fair Fun	*The Wombles*	60 mins	unspecified	£6.99
BBC Enterprises	*Watch with Mother*	75 mins	200,000	£7.99
The Video Collection	*Thundercats, Ho!*	90 mins	100,000+	£9.99
Palace Video	*The Snowman*	30 mins	100,000+	£9.99
CIC Video	*Woody Woodpecker Vol 1*	67 mins	unspecified	£7.99
Thames Video	*Sooty*	60 mins	unspecified	£7.99

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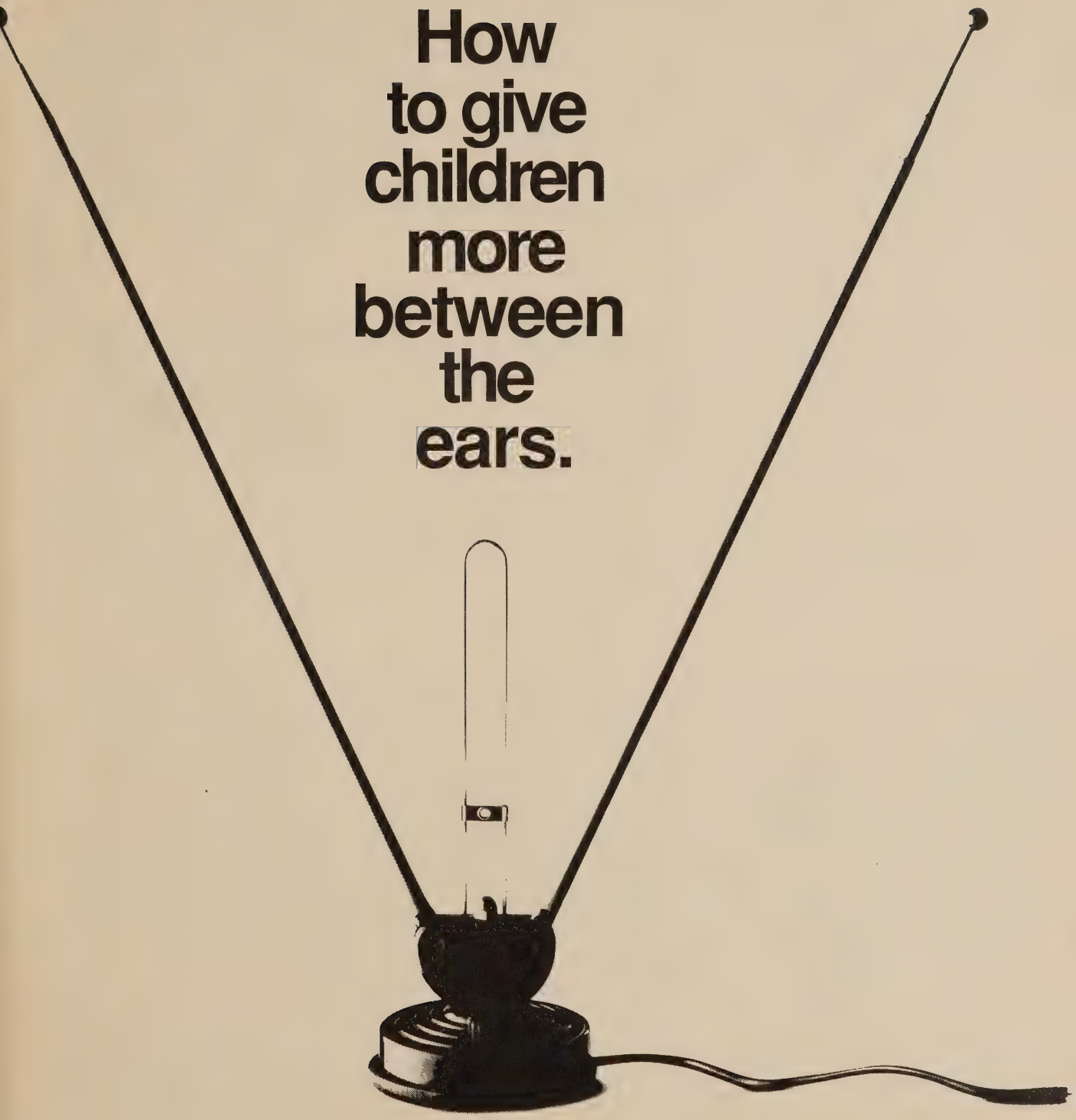

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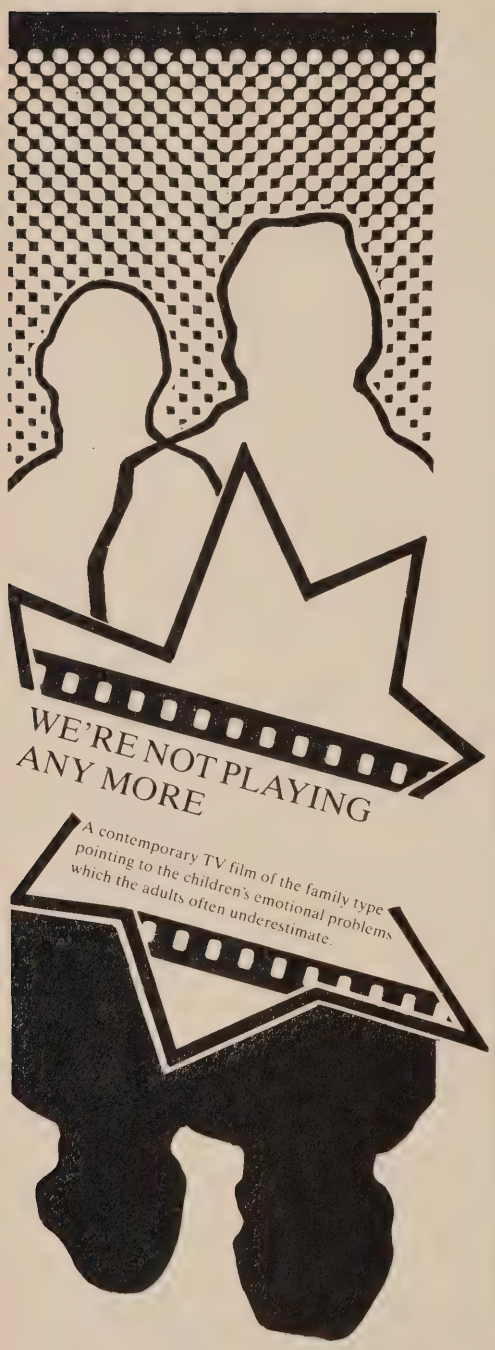

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Classic goes hi-tech

Big on budget and big on special effects the Narnia series is the latest BBC children's drama. Cheryl Markosky reports on its production plans.

THE BBC'S Children's Drama Department is embarking on its most ambitious and lavish series to date, with the shooting of CS Lewis's well-loved *Narnia* series. Eighteen episodes of the Lewis books will be produced over the next three years for £7 million (US$11.9 million), including the classic *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe.*

Producer Paul Stone, responsible for the successful *Box of Delights,* believes there is room in the international market for high-quality family drama.

He says: "Commercially *Narnia* is a very viable project, judging from the huge amount of interest for family drama. Essentially these are children's programmes, that will also appeal to a wide audience."

The series is backed by the commercial arm of the Corporation, BBC Enterprises. Enterprises is in the final stages of tying up a co-production deal with the United States, and is also currently negotiating sales with West Germany, Australia and New Zealand.

'Box of Delights': Same special effects to be used in Narnia.

The cast includes Barbara Kellerman as the White Witch, Ronald Pickup as the voice of Aslam (the Lion) and Ailsa Berk as the Lion itself. Berk featured in the film *Greystoke* and is renowned for her ability to create suitable animal movements.

Stone says the children are essentially the major characters and it took a substantial amount of time and work to find the right children for the roles.

"Director Marilyn Fox and I saw hundreds of children," explains Stone, "before finally whittling them down to just four."

Stone and his team are facing a remarkable challenge, condensing all of Lewis's novels into eighteen episodes, while maintaining some sort of chronological order.

Stone adds, "It is a challenge adapting such a wonderful story for television and meeting the new technology at the same time."

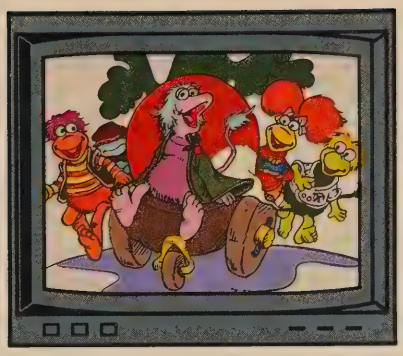
The series is being shot on one-inch tape, shot by shot with a single camera, thus combining traditional film methods with the opportunity to use complex video effects in post-production. A substantial number of the technicians from *The Box of Delights* are involved with *Narnia* and many of the award-winning techniques deployed will also be used.

Special effects used in *Narnia* promise to be as exciting as those in *The Box of Delights,* if not more intriguing. Effects will be multi-layered, says Stone, with naturalistic material, including shots of the children, mixed with detailed animation. The BBC is currently negotiating with an outside facility house to produce the animated sequences of Lewis's fantastic ghouls and creatures.

"You require a major television company to undertake this project," adds Stone, reaffirming the BBC's position as a key producer of good children's drama. "We produce a lot of drama in a year, from classics to young contemporary material, like *Grange Hill.*"

Despite the commercial success of many of their productions, Stone still feels one has to continue to fight for quality. "Given the major changes in the industry that are almost here and new outlets for transmission, TV as we know it will clearly alter. I hope the changes won't alter the balance so drastically that television becomes just a commercial race to grab the market."

With the UK transmission of *Narnia* planned for the end of the year and strong international interest already present, it appears that companies such as Henson TV, with *The Storyteller,* Sullivan Films with *Anne of Green Gables,* and now the BBC with *Narnia* are proving there is a place for high quality, well-produced and necessarily expensive drama material particularly aimed at an overall family audience. ■



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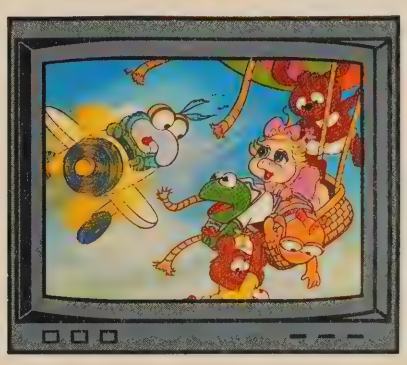

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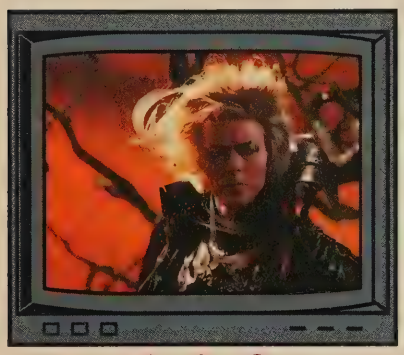

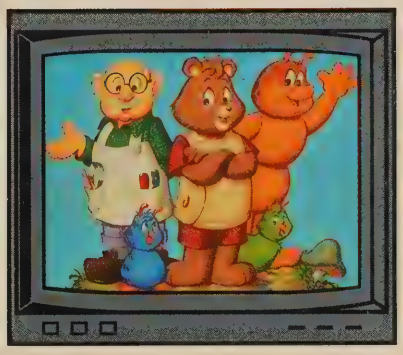

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Family Thais

Children's television viewing habits would seem to be different in Thailand to elsewhere. Jay Adair takes a look at how and why.

THAILAND, the fabled ancient Kingdom of Siam, is a rapidly growing – some say "booming" – nation which is fast getting attention from both tourists and investors and seems poised to join some of the other newly industrialised countries (NIC) in Asia within the next decade.

With a land mass about the size of France, and a populatin in excess of 55 million, Thailand or "The Land of Smiles" is bringing exactly that – smiles – to travellers, businessmen, and manufacturers. Most importantly, it is a country rapidly moving from an agriculatural backwater to the forefront of urbanisation and consumer spending.

With this transformation has also come a more aggressive advertising-communications industry that does not always mirror many of the accepted and preconceived notions of the West. In fact, many of the "norms" readily accepted in other cultures rarely exist in this fast-developing Third World Country. And no area seems quite as unique as the area of television and children's programming.

Big business

In a country where over 50 per cent of the population is under the age of 18 years old, it is would seem a foregone conclusion that television kid's programming is big business. But, is it?

A second and more thorough examination suggests something a little different. The most recent survey of "most watched television shows" for kids between six and nine indicates all but one of 12 programme in the "Top Dozen" to be traditional adult vehicles – including sports, news, documentary and historical specials, and dramas.

The situation for kids 10-14 years old was not very different. Although a few of these shows aired on weekend mornings (the traditional prime time for children), the overwhelming majority occurred in prime time for adults – with some even ending after 22.00 hours – notoriously late for heavy children's viewing by Western standards.

Twelve-year veteran of Thai television and Assistant Director of Programming for TV 3, Andrea Cahn, provided valuable insight into what was happening on the children's scene.

She indicated that "Thailand is a youthful culture that revolves around the basic family unit. Programmes that involve friends, people, and personal relationships are watched by the entire family." She added, "Most of the popular Thai dramas focus on moral problems and deal with basic Thai values encompassing hard work, honesty, and personal integrity."

This emphasis on family viewing reflects the heavy influence of women in Thai society in general, and in the home in particular. In short, children don't control the TV set. The women do.

This phenomenon is re-enforced by the hard realities of advertising which supports all four commercial television networks. Many of the traditional kids advertisers are virtually absent from Thai television. For instance, the category of fast foods: McDonalds, A&W Root Beer, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Dunkin' Donuts are all present and popular in Bangkok, but not one of these fast foods is heavily committed to television. Certainly none have sponsored any traditional children's programmes. And although Thailand has become a major exporter of toys, there is almost a virtual absence of toy advertising on television.

Actually, the primary players in children's advertising have been the sweets and instant noodles categories. And the Thai penchant for a "sweet tooth" is vividly reconfirmed on television with candy as the major advertiser within this group.

Despite all these idiosyncracies, it would be erroneous to conclude that there are no "traditional" children's vehicles airing and popular on Thai television. Most notable: the animated cartoon. Since high costs prevent any local production, Thailand imports all its animated entertainment from overseas. The two suppliers being basically Japan and the West.

Among the top rated imported cartoons are *Touché Turtle* from the US *The Smurfs* from Belgium, and a myriad of Japanese animations that include *Doraemon, Dragon Ball, Q-Taro, Asawin Spinean, Centurions,* and *Laserion.*

Interestingly, the undisputed leader of these – *Touché Turtle* – is aired exclusively in primetime throughout the week – reemphasising the earlier observations about heavy family viewing. The others were programmed in traditional kids slots Monday through Friday 16.00-18.00 hours and Saturday/Sunday mornings 0800-11.00.

Top 8 animation imports 6-9 years (May 30 – July 3 1988)

Rank	Programme	Day	Channel	Supplier	Ratings (000's)	(%)
1.	Touché Turtle	Fri	7	USA	340	20
2.	Doraemon	Sun	9	Japan	299	18
3.	Touché Turtle	Wed	7	USA	283	17
4.	Touché Turtle	Tue	7	USA	180	16
5.	Dragon Ball	Sat	9	Japan	172	15
6.	Touché Turtle	Wed	7	USA	170	15
7.	Laserion	Sat	9	Japan	89	8
8.	Centurions	Sun	9	Japan	89	8

Source: DEE MAR RESEARCH

Paced animation

But, there was more than a distinction of time slots between the fare from the West and that of Japan. Several programming executives crystalised those differences with comments like "the Japanese cartoons were violently and sexually oriented." The Japanese cartoons were also characterised as being "fast action, rapid-loud group dialogue, and essentially lacking in any message or meaning."

In sharp contrast, the Western cartoons were distinguished as "somewhat more paced – with an emphasis on dialogue that was more one-on-one", and carrying a highly moralistic message or meaning – sometimes to the point of being overbearing.

When asked about the lack of Eastern European children's fare, one Thai executive sighed and said, "The anima-

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- A co-production between Ciné Groupe (Canada), S.A. "F.3" (Belgium) and Cinémation (France)

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- Computer color rendering for backgrounds and animation
- A coproduction between CINE GROUPE (Canada) and LABEL 35 (France)

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Family Thais

▶ continued from p34

tin is way too slow, and that the frames per second are much lower than either the Japanese or Western offerings." In short, unsuitable to Thai taste.

The distinctions between the two major suppliers even spiltover into the production area. Japanese fare being described as "more fantasy-like" and featuring "abnormal or distorted human characteristics." The Western cartoons universally evaluated as being "more realistic" and "portraying human beings in a more normal perspective."

Equally agreed was that Western suppliers provided a more polished product with higher production values.

Despite the differences, both products have made an indelible impression on Thai television, and both seem to be attracting station buyers and viewing audiences.

Although outside suppliers dominate the animated cartoon area, Thailand is not without its locally produced children's shows. Since production houses are limited, each of the four commercial networks undertakes its own productions internally. Most popular of which are *Kled-Lab Roi-Yim* (TV7), *Plab-pluemg Si Chompu* (TV7), *(Kra Jok Hok Darn* (TV7) and *Ti-Da Dao Dam* (TV3). These are essentially Thai soap operas that often feature children dealing with social problems, school situations, and interrelationships with each other. In many ways, they are not much different in style and content than the leading programmes for adults in primetime. The only difference is scheduling: these shows come on after school between 16.00-18.00 hours. Their popularity at least equals and often exceeds the most successful of the imported cartoons.

Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of Thai television – and also, per chance, a contributing factor in its uniqueness is the regulation that dictates all Thai television must be aired in the Thai language. Each import is dubbed accordingly to the native tongue. However, no such regulation applies to radio, and since most of the Bangkok TV stations also co-own radio stations, three of the four commercial networks feature English-language soundracks on FM radio.

This service allows the "foreigner" or English enthusiasts to turn down his volume on the TV set – and turn in the appropriate radio station for the original translation. The service is offered only in English by all three participating Bangkok stations.

As Thailand continues to prosper economically and advance infrastructurally, its thirst for more and more services and products will grow. However, it is questionable whether programming habits will alter dramatically in the years ahead.

Top Dozen Children's Programmes 6-9 Years (May 30 – July 3, 1988)

Rank	Programme	Channel	Time	Ratings (000's)	(%)
1.	Nang Sib Song (Thai drama)	7	Sat 8:26	250	22
2.	Nang Sib Song (Thai drama)	7	Sun 8:27	241	22
3.	Sa-Wan Bieng (Thai drama)	7	Sun 21:26	234	21
4.	Touché Turtle (Cartoon)	7	Fri 21:18	219	20
5.	Sport News	7	Wed 20:39	218	20
6.	Sa-Wan Bieng (Thai drama)	7	Sat 21:02	215	19
7.	Sa-Wan Bieng (Thai drama)	7	Fri 21:23	214	19
8.	LB-Longest Monarch (Documentary)	7	Fri 20:50	207	19
9.	Sport News	7	Fri 20:38	205	18
10.	Sport News	7	Tue 20:40	200	18
11.	SP-Royal Activity (Special)	7	Wed 20:52	194	17
12.	Maya	7	Thu 21:09	192	17

Source: DEE MAR RESEARCH

No disrespect

Andrea Cahn from TV3 thinks not. She explained, "Thai television is essentially a reflection of Thai culture. At one time I thought there might be a greater reliance on outsiders. But, advancements in technology – especially the VCR – has provided an outlet for foreign entertainment thereby allowing the broadcasting medium an opportunity to be free from foreign pressures and evolve gradually."

She emphasised "TV3 would never buy or air cartoons or any children's programming which reflect distrespect to parents or authority figures – which is often the theme in Japanese animation."

This may not bode well for the Japanese supplies or even international distributors, but it clearly reflects a seasoned judgement strongly shaping the profile of Thai children's television. ■

US company in free China

A maestro sets up a film studio in Shenzhen

A MAJOR new force looks set to emerge on to the international production scene: Pacific Rim Media Inc. Set up in 1987 by Alan Livingstone, its animation subsidiary Pacific Rim Animation is the only wholly American-owned film company based in mainland China and licensed by the Chinese government.

Livingstone is most certainly a man with a past. Creator of the song "I tawt I taw a Puddy Tat" and the character Bozo the Clown, he brought the Beatles to the US, signed Frank Sinatra to Capitol Records, where he was president and developed the pilot for *Bonanza* at NBC, where he was VP of TV Programming. He was also President of Twentieth Century Fox's Entertainment Division, and George Lucas' *Star Wars* was one of many hits produced during his time.

Livingstone's experience's on mainland China have shown the Chinese to be highly qualified artistically, and in this labour-intensive field, highly-competitive in terms of costs. Historically, countries such as Japan, Australia and the Philippines have been main centres of animation production, but their prices are rising and, like the US before them, they risk pricing themselves out of the market-place.

In establishing a base of operations in China, Livingstone recently produced a one-hour animated television special *Sparky's Magic Piano*, based on his own 1948 classic. During the production of *Sparky's*, Livingstone and his colleagues were able to identify the top Chinese animators, background artists, etc, all of whom are now working for Pacific Rim.

The company's animation studio is supervised by a Hong Kong Chinese animator fluent in both Mandarin and English, Milt Vallas, Pacific Rim's US Production Manager, has 25 years' experience in animation, and is currently in China supervising the initial production of a half-hour series for a French company. Two animated features are currently in negotiation.

The studio itself is fully equipped with US-made cameras, editing equipment and all other necessary supplies. Located in Shenzhen, China, a free economic zone, it is just 40 minutes train journey from Hong Kong. ■

Science show tops ratings

The team behind Beyond 2000 is going abroad and thinking BIG, reports Katherine Tulich.

IN AUSTRALIA it outrates *LA Law* and *Moonlighting*. Quite often it's the top or second top rating show in a week.

It's the most widely viewed and most widely viewed programme of its kind. Its seen in 54 countries – Australia, the US, South America, Europe, the USSR, the Middle East, South East Asia and China.

A sample of a show would feature anything from computer dating for bulls to a robot that cleans the French sewers.

The show is called *Beyond 2000* and has been one of Australia's major production successes.

The programme which could be called the *60 Minutes* of science show is produced by the Beyond International Group (BIG) who began life as a production house in 1985 to produce *Beyond 2000*. There was an initial order from the 7 network of 20 one hour episodes which increased to 32 in 1986 and then 40 hours in 87 and 88. *Beyond 2000* is presented as an up-to-date razzamatazz magazine style programme exploring the latest in science and technology. Each one hour contains eight to 10 reports recorded on location in over 40 countries around the world. Although science programming is nothing new (take for èxample the long running BBC programme *Tomorrow's World*), the key to *Beyond 2000's* success is its approach. The heady subject of science is given a pop twist which aims at family viewing. It has brought science into the living room and has managed to cross most audience demographics of age, sex, economic and social criteria.

"We keep firmly in mind that our audience would probably answer 'no' if they were asked whether they were interested in science and technology," said the show's executive producer Peter Abbott. "But if we make science entertaining and if it is relevant to peoples lives then they are interested. People want to know about things that will have an impact on their lives."

Abbott felt that the level of humanity presented in the programme was important. "So much science television reinforces the mystery of science and the stereotype of scientists being boring and dull," said Abbott. "But our reporters are just average people. They are not scientists. We work on the basis of whether we find it interesting or intriguing or does it make us angry — then it's potentially a story." It could be argued that *Beyond 2000* skirts controversial issues avoiding the detrimental ramifications that technology has often caused in many incidences. But Abbott disagrees: "We express our genuine enthusiasm for the possibilities

Beyond 2000: Iain Finlay and an Aero Trim (top) and Amanda Keller plus the Bionic Jockey.

that science opens up. That's not to say we don't take on issues. But where we do take them on, we treat our audience with respect."

Going into its fourth year of production *Beyond 2000* has expressed more of a committment to present issues. "Those segments will not be regular features and they will certainly not dominate the programmes in which they are screened," said Abbott. "But when a programme like *Beyond* has been so successful around the world and reaches so many people, it would almost be irresponsible of us not to bring to the public's attention some of the inequities and misconceptions that exist around the world in so many areas." *Beyond's* international success could also be attributed to the fact that it is so widely travelled. The production team travel to an average of 28 countries a year with each of the seven reporters spending about 16 to 17 weeks on the road. "None of the other science programmes travel to the extent we do," said Abbott. "We're one of the very few shows that takes a truly global view. There's no evidence where the show comes from apart from the Australian reporters."

However, for the parochial US market they initially prepared a repackage of 12 shows with studio links redone by an American presenter, actor, David Birney. It was put into syndication on the PBS network but not enough stations picked it up to put it back into syndication. They have found more success by showing the Australian show in its entirety on the Discovery cable channel, which goes into 32 million American homes. Discovery has purchased 42 hours of the series. In another coup for the programme the US Fox Broadcasting Corporation recently commissioned the Beyond group to produce a science technology magazine show based on the same concepts as *Beyond 2000*, but using American correspondents. They have produced a pilot and Fox has the option to order 13 one hour episodes. This marks the first time an Australian production house has won a contract for a primetime non-drama series.

According to Mikael Borglund, BIG's finance and marketing director, the show will have a different look and a much stronger American slant. "Like the *Beyond 2000* show it will have crews working with each of the reporters gathering stories in the US and around the world, but all of the research and post production will be done in Sydney," he said. With its flagship programme of *Beyond 2000*, BIG is becoming one of Australia's fastest growing entertainment empires. By the end of 1988 it will have three hours of weekly prime time television screening on Australian network television.

A new programme called *Just For the Record* recently began screening on the 10 network. It already has finalised screening contracts in Japan and Malaysia and is expected to sell well into other territories. *Just For the Record* is a one hour action adventure magazine

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Science show tops

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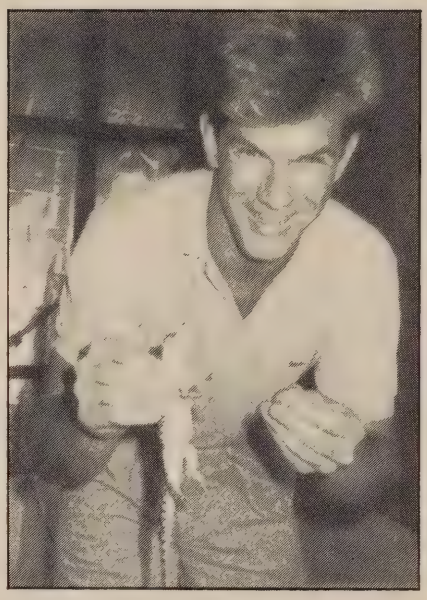
series that highlights the extraordinary achievements of man around the world – from the admirable to the bizarre. Twenty hours have been shot so far. It is more visually oriented than *Beyond 2000* with an up tempo video clip style that is aimed at the 10 to 35 age group.

BIG's production slate for 88 also includes three mini series, three sitcoms, drama serials and two international documentary series both of which will be shot outside Australia.

They are also preparing an international children's science and technology programme called *Life, Technology and All That Stuff* which will be targeted to primary school and younger children around the world. The idea was conceived because the company saw a lack of this type of programming for children. Its aim is to simplify science and technology for young children by taking it down to the very basic principles. The initial package will be 12 half hour programmes with an option to expand the series further. The series will combine animation and live action. Production begins later this year.



Beyond 2000: "An up-to-date magazine programme exploring the latest in science and technology."

BIG has also entered into an output situation with new channel TV3 in New Zealand whom it will start to supply with a significant number of hours from March next year including some repackaging and some new programming. The company also intends to move into feature film production with plans to produce at least two feature films in the next year. According to the company's chairman and managing director Phil Guerlach, 1987's performance by the company was "beyond" expectations. "Our projections for 1987 were 86 hours of television. In fact we produced 87 hours," he said. The international performance has also been substantial. "There has been a considerable increase in our gross turnover and foreign revenue over the past 12 months. Our entire revenues should increase by over 300 per cent over the next year if we continue along the lines that we are at the present," he said.

What also makes this company remarkable is the fact that the average age of the company executives is late 20s and early 30s, and a number of them such as Guerlach and Borglund have come from a background of rock music management. Not bad going for a company which started life with one science programme that at the time was predicted by at least one major TV network executive would only last a year because it would not work commercially. ■

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Canadian group goes The animation route

An environmentally-aware series, co-productions with France, Belgium and Yugoslavia and orders worth $35 million are currently keeping the Quebecois Ciné Groupe busy, Daphne Lavers reports.

IN THE heart of downtown Montreal is the Paroisse Ste-Brigide, an imposing grey stone edifice of the Catholic Church built with traditional Quebec elegance. Next door is the former presbytery, now the home of Ciné Groupe Inc., one of the largest Quebec animation houses.

Across the street is the (relatively) new Radio Canada complex: and two blocks away is the TVA affiliate, CFTM-TV. The location is central, charming and unhurried.

But Ciné Groupe, like many other Canadian companies, has turned its eyes overseas, to the international scene, with profitable results.

Ciné Groupe started as a production house in the late 1970's, with episodic television series and sponsored productions for large corporate and government entities. Three years ago, however, the company directed all its attention into animation, an effort that this year will see the company engaged in around $35 million worth of animated television programming, keeping its 100 employees hopping.

One of the company's prime products is *Ovide and the Gang,* 65 13-minute animated episodes, co-produced with Belgium, which according to VP marketing Michel Zgarka, has sold very well around the world.

Currently in post-production is *Moon Glow,* a theatrical feature film with Belgium and France, called *Bino Fabulé* in French.

Bino is a young "new wave" scientist whose goal in life, Zgarka asserts, is to learn to fly. *Moon Glow* integrates live action with 3-D animation, and following theatrical release will be a re-edit as two half hour specials.

Currently in production is *Sharkey and George,* a $4.4 million co-production with Label 35 in France, which will see the production of 26 13-minute episodes, or 13 half hours, slated for airing in 1989.

Ciné Groupe has also cut a deal with Zagreb Films of Yugoslavia, a pre-eminent animation and film house for 26 episodes of *The Little Flying Bears.* Characters and story idea originated at Zagreb, with development and scripting from Ciné Groupe.

The Little Flying Bears perhaps marks the difference in Ciné Groupe productions. The series, for children aged three to six, is like most Ciné Groupe productions, deliberately non-violent. And this series also deals with environmental issues the next generation will have to face in deadly earnest.

'Ovide and the Gang': Co-produced with Belguim.

"I think Hollywood is discovering that animation-wise, zips and zaps and laser shots and jet fighters just don't last anymore," said line producer Hugh Campbell. "It all looks the same, there's no personality. It doesn't matter what channel you're watching, it's just one noise after another. I think they'll be moving away from the high-tech violent sci-fi stuff and more into the personal stories and believable characters."

Little Flying Bears will deal naturally with such subjects as acid rain, animal leg-hold traps and the destruction of the ozone layer, all in an entertaining and at the same time informative manner.

"There's so many weapons sold to children to go with the (current) television shows," said Zgarka, "and I think consumer groups are fed up with robotics for children. The comment we're getting is that our product is right on target."

Ciné Groupe may be on target in other areas as well. The company's backbone in the early years was, along with productions, its service division, still fully operational with special sound effects equipment and extensive editing gear, along with dubbing equipment. Ciné Groupe is looking at the possibility of a new commercial production division, perhaps in the next couple of years. With perfect animal characters, merchandising in another area of expansion. And Ciné Groupe is, like any current company, getting into computer graphics and animation with an Iris workstation and Alias software. With space at a premium in the former presbytery, the computer graphics division is located at the Université de Quebec à Montréal.

The move into total animation was also a canny one because, as Zgarka observed, the life cycle for animation is longer — perhaps 15 to 20 years. A project currently in development, may change the format of animation somewhat; with a working title of *Christmas Shakedown,* Ciné Groupe hopes to do the first animated mini-series for Christmas audience, half-hour episodes to run over five consecutive nights during the Christmas season, slated for completion by 1990.

Ciné Groupe has adopted an international — or perhaps universal flavour for its productions. Its productions are not specifically, identifiably Canadian. The universal appeal is essential, Zgarka said; there's no room for nationalistic fervour and animation has world-wide appeal, he added. Children everywhere like the same kinds of things. ■

Fast frames and user-friendly . . .

A computer wizard has come up with a programme to speed up the animation process, Jean-Louis Erneux reports.

ALEX Carola is a young animator, born in Italy, but educated in Belgium, at the famous professional school in La Cambre, before working with the animation studio Graphoui on the popular series *Quick and Flupke*. He discovered computers on his own and mastered them to a point where he was able to conceive an original software application for his profession.

Electronic animation test systems greatly facilitate the job of animators. Their sketches no longer have to be fixed on film which, in its turn had to be developed. The traditional procedure was very time-consuming, but Carola's electronic system allows the animator various speeds on a frame-by-frame basis, or change the order of these.

"A few years ago," said Carola, "the Japanese company NAC marketed its Quick Action Recorder, which was a big improvement at that time. But it uses a specially-designed keyboard and its possibilities are limited. I spent two years developing a pencil test system with an integrated full-screen exposure-sheet editor, working on a professional but standard micro-computer that could be used for the many more other traditional applications, for example wordprocessing or spreadsheets. And, above all I tried to make it a user-friendly system, with a mouse, a voice synthesizer and a window-based software."

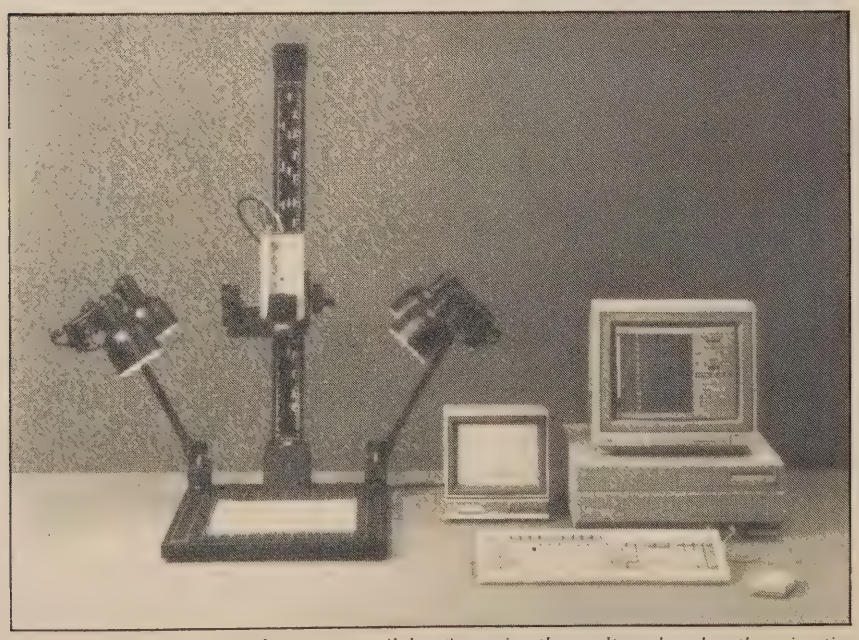
Softoons, as it is called, is the result of many solitary hours of research. It is already very much discussed in the world of animation studios, continuously tested by professionals and students in the small offices of Carola's small company, Animation Tools International which he started in 1987. A distribution contract of this software has been finalised in May with the London-based company Chroma Colour.

The new system lets you shoot your pencil drawings, view the results in real-time and analyse the animation frame-by-frame. The pencil drawings are instantaneously digitalised by a specially-made device, through a black and white video camera. Many on-screen exposure-sheet editing functions allow to copy or erase frames or blocks of frames, in insert or overwrite mode. And there is a real-time playback of animated scene and frame-by-frame analysis, at a selectable speed (1 to 99 frames per second).

Softoons has been developed to be used on the micro-computer Commodore Amiga 2000 and only this one which, with its multitask operating system and its three coprocessors, is appreciated for various computer graphics applications. It works with the 1 Mb standard RAM to be expanded with a 2 Mb card. This allows to store up to 265 frames which, explains Alex Carola, covers more than 95 per cent of the usual pencil test needs. But the new animation software can cope with a 9 Mb RAM, permitting the system to handle over 850 drawings per scene.

"It is much more flexible than the Quick Action system," said Carola. "And maybe three times cheaper than the Japanese system which is a good system has the disadvantages of being the pioneer." The complete animation test system will be sold for around US$8,600, according to Carola after a first estimation.

Already, the animator is thinking of future improvements. Frames can be arranged in various ways, repeated and immediately shown at various speeds. But with the first version, the frames cannot actually be edited on the screen. The composition of a frame cannot be altered. Compounded frames will also be able to be stored in next versions. And perhaps the electronic male voice which currently confirms the right storage of each frame could optionally be a female-one. If it really wants to be user-friendly. ■



The Softoons: Allows you to shoot your pencil drawings, view the results and analyse the animation frame by frame.

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UK response to the 1992 challenge

A single market is promised when the trade barriers in Europe go down. But what will it mean to the already confused UK facilities scene? Sean Deeney reports

DESPITE regular TV commercials by some of Britain's notable entrepreneurs, 1992 and the European "single market" remains an obscure horizon, an alternative form of deregulation in an already confused UK market.

Between the pressures on the UK's existing broadcasting infrastructure — satellite television, independent production quotas, ITV franchise sales ET AL — the slippery slope of European opportunities and European competition is yet another variable, perhaps one too many.

The television facilities market, in the main still clustered around London's heartland, is no exception. On most subjects, there are as many opinions as there are companies, but there is general agreement on one particular point. London *is* the capital of Europe in terms of the expertise and the range of its post-production services. It even rivals New York and Los Angeles in the minds of some, making it pre-eminent on the world scene.

Of course, the sense of being best might just be another expression of the British penchant for isolationism and arrogance, but in post-production there is a real case to be made. Over 500 companies list their activity as post production in the UK and 43 per cent of a recent NERA survey claimed an annual turnover in excess of £1 million. There are few good estimates of the total turnover size of the London facilities, but some observers have pitched a conservative figure at around £200 million per annum.

But if it is big business, it is also a service industry which must, of necessity, be market-led. In simple terms, if the customer demands a piece of equipment, you must supply and if the market profile changes — to include Europe for example — you might just have to respond.

Paul Smith, MD of Complete Video, points up the difficulty of predicting anything more than six months ahead, although he adds: "Ideas are always bubbling." Complete has just added a second audio suite, on a decision taken three months ago which he says, would not have been contemplated nine months ago. His equipment investment plans take the company forward about a year, with a couple of D2 machines, a heavy commitment to SP Betacam and an order for a Grass Valley digital mixer, a first cautious step towards digital TV facilities. Graphics is the company's biggest growth area, boasting two Paintboxes, Quantel Harry, Mirage and Encore, and an Abekas A64.

With a £1.6 million spend on equipment last year, Smith admits that Complete must think hard about purchases because it is an independent house that must earn what it invests. He does not discount "an alliance" altogether, but insists it would have to show a tangible benefit for Complete's future, and its 65 staff. The strategy is a dynamic one, with the production company Celador, and a new venture, Complete Systems which will design and manufacture equipment when it is officially launched in the autumn. Already, two products have been fully tested — a computer control system that is multi-functional and can run anything from a digital audio library (an ITV company has ordered one for this purpose) to record machines, and a low-cost digital frame store.

As for Europe, Smith investigated the possibility of "investing" in Spain almost three years ago, but decided not to go ahead: "Obviously, as television expands, there are going to be more commercials shot, for example. Our view is that the agencies in Europe look to the British production companies as being the most creative for prestige commercials, though of course low budget ads will probably be produced

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UK facilities' response

▶ continued from p41

locally. Therefore, it's best that we're here in the UK."

Smith also feels that the UK market is far from satisfied, and insists that "to set up an operation abroad of which we could be proud, would be an expensive task." If Complete was to gain more European business, Smith maintains that "generally speaking" it would be coming through a British production company, again obviating the need to go into Europe: "We have three or four European commercials on our show-reel," he says, "but our client is the UK production company."

He does not expect 1992 to altar the equation significantly, nor does he expect that new competition at home — in the form of BBC and ITV companies marketing their in-house facilities and studios to outside users — will bring on many changes: "I think the ITV companies know how far behind they are in terms of facilities, and they know how much money would have to be spent to compete with the facilities in London. But their studios will be sold to customers because its their strongest asset." About 30 per cent of Complete's business is broadcast work, 45 per cent commercials, 8 per cent promos and 15 per cent corporate.

"I think the ITV companies know how far behind they are in terms of facilities."

Complete Video; Paul Smith: Ideas bubbling.

Brian Wiseman, MD of Molinare-Visions has also looked at Spain to invest, and has recently opened a £2.5 million facility in Madrid, Molinare holding a 50 per cent stake with two Spanish partners. Wiseman is happy with the results to date, recouping two-thirds of his break even figure in the first 20 days despite having only one of the two suites open for business. He expects that Molinare Spain will be the number one facility company in the country by the end of the year.

He admits that the set up time was delayed by the import and export requirements in the US and Spain, and that the meaning of the term *mānana* came home with force, but adds that the experience to date is his "justification to do other things in Europe."

Visions Holland, the other European activity of the group, is equally encouraging, "in terms of its gross margins, it's the most profitable company in the whole group," says Wiseman. The company has two edit suites, Paintbox, telecine and a newly-built audio suite, staffed by 13 people. It is a 100 per cent subsidiary of the parent company.

"I see the opportunities in Europe," he says "as being much more interesting than squabbling in an over-supplied London market. There are two other possibilities we are currently looking at and I think we've identified where we want to be by 1992." Wiseman sees a future that will include multi-national advertising agencies seeking to work on the same multi-national basis with production and facility companies: "That's the concept behind it," he adds.

Finding staff willing to go out to Europe is not a problem says Wiseman, because there is a big enough pool within his group and around the London business to make it possible. There are 10 staff from the UK at Molinare Spain (five of whom speak Spanish), some from within Molinare and others poached from places like TVam, MPC and Virgin. "My own feeling is that at the end of a year to two years, I'll have the devil's own job getting them back again."

Andrew Vere at SVC — like Complete Video, an independent facility house which is not part of a larger group — begs to differ. "If you were a brilliant top-class editor in London, I'd have to pay you a lot of money to get you to Spain and wouldn't you be concerned about getting a job when you got back?"

He admits to being fascinated by the Molinare experiment, he spent £2 million on new equipment last year and may lay out as much again this year, but his commitment to the business does not extend to establishing European subsidiaries: "It's still down to nationalistic

concerns. Never rely on work coming in from abroad, because what they're doing in 1992 will start to pay dividends in 30 years time with a new generation of people being educated differently."

Vere sees an enormous impact on the retail sector, and so on manufacturing, but in services "they usually develop within a specific environment to provide a specific kind of service. I really can't see us concentrating our efforts on increasing our post-production facilities in Europe."

He says the "high creative input side" of television — expertise and know-how is the only exportable commodity and adds that anything the European market does not already know, it will quickly learn, tinging European investments with a "short-term" quality. Production, transmission and viewership are, he says, much more likely to be affected than post-production.

SVC is not, however, standing still. With six edit suites, including a three-machine off-line and the most recent addition, the digital suite featuring two D1 machines, and a Sony controller in charge of the Abekas-based facility — SVC is expanding. The group now includes Stevens-Kellehar, an animatics service, and Nick Hague Productions making corporate video programmes. Vere is not yet finished with company acquisitions, but these are likely to be UK-based operations. The company has also added a computer graphics capability via Symbolics and is planning another Da Vinci colour correction system to match the one already in place. "The biggest change for us," says Vere, "is in positioning and profile — I think we've taken that step between being good and being very good that you can only make after time."

"I really can't see us . . . increasing our post-production facilities in Europe."

Annie Gordon, Trilion's marketing manager, says that her company is signing a technical expertise agreement, laying the plans for a new Spanish facility which will open shortly. Trilion will have a 17½ per cent stake in the venture with other Spanish partners, which will be called Viva Video. "We're actively looking at other markets," she adds.

New television channels in Spain's privatised market and a rise in commercials production of up to 35 per cent were all the encouragement Trilion needed. Trilion is the parent company, running four subsidiaries: Limehouse Television, a production arm which includes Limehouse Productions and Cheerleader Television, regional facilities such as Picardy Pictures, based in Edinburgh, Scotland and Viewplan, the re-launched equipment hire company which now has nine regional offices around the UK and is looking to expand into Europe.

As well as studios — which are due to find a permanent home very shortly following redevelopment of the original docklands site — and facilities, Limehouse Television also includes a fleet of OB vehicles, and with Viewplan to back this up, the equipment variations that can be offered to customers are virtually endless. Although Limehouse does not boast all the most sophisticated equipment of the commercials post-production houses, a recent rights issue which raised £17.5 million (money that has to be spent within a year to avoid capital gains tax), there is no shortage of investment capital to hand.

Gordon is a key member of the group's newly-established "think-tank", specifically designed to investigate all new business possibilities for each company and for the group. She indicates this includes the possibility of an ITV franchise should the opportunity arise.

Martin Carter, of Picture Post facilities, believes that 1992 and the single market could make a big impact on production, easing the transfer of acting and craft talent across borders, but he sees London's pre-eminence in facilities lasting for a while yet: "When you look at the amount of facilities available here, nobody can overnight match what we've built up, but Europe will certainly grow."

Carter says Picture Post will actively pursue European business as part of the company's strategy to offer facilities across the board from near-top end commercials to corporate work, on tape and film. Picture Post has been in business for 14 years, but has recently undergone a radical change, with a move in premises and three edit suites, graphics ability and film-cutting now on offer to clients. Carter prizes the company's independence, but says it is too early in the expansion process to talk about any further plans.

Tele-Cine is also expanding and re-organising into film and tape depart-

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UK Facilities Guide

Below is *TV World's* annual guide to pre-production, production and post-production services offered by UK facilities houses. Addresses are at the end of the directory. This has been compiled from responses to *TV World's* listings service.

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The Helicopter Partnership

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Video House, 48 Charlotte Street
London W1P 1LX
Tel: 637 3253
Contact: Ron Prince

TSI VIDEO
10 Grape Street
London WC2H 8DY
Tel: 379 3435
Contact: Felicity Chadwick
Recent Clients: Tyne Tees
LWT
Cricket Communications
Virgin Lifetime

TVP VIDEO DUBBING
1A Poland Street
London W1V 3DG
Tel: 439 2975
Contact: Mr. Nardi
Recent Clients: Pacific Arts
Transworld International
Sport Aid '88
Video Services Corporation

TWENTY TWO POST PRODUCTIONS LTD
22 Golden Square
London W1R 3PA
Tel: 439 2332
Contact: Marley Bryan
Recent Clients: Tall Pony Productions — USA
Doro Productions — Austria
Ogilvy & Mather — USA

TWTV
20 Kingly Street
London W1R 5LD
Tel: 437 4706
Contact: Caroline McManus
Recent Clients: Amnesty International
British Council
Habitat Conran Design Group
ITN Channel Four News

ULTRASOUND (Digital Audio Production)
Grafton House
2 Golden Square
London W1R 3AD
Tel: 439 7138
Contact: David Wooley
Recent Clients: Initial TV
PDO (Optical Disc Manufacturing)
CIC International
Phonogram International

VIDEO DUPLICATING CO LTD
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Slough, Berkshire
Tel: 0753 25142
Contact: Andrew Morrice
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London W1V 1DL
Tel: 734 4811
Contact: Matt McCarthy
Recent Clients: Derko Films
Dister Films
Paul Casalini
Lorimar

VIDEO TIME LTD
22-24 Greek Street
London W1
Tel: 439 1211
Contact: Mr Hawkins
Recent Clients: Shell
JWT

VIEWPLAN
67 Indescon Court
Millharbour
Millwall Docks
London E14 9TM
Tel: 538 5555
Contact: Jennie Mak

VISNEWS LTD
Cumberland Avenue
London NW10 7EH
Tel: 965 7733
Contact: Margaret Reid

WEST ONE TELEVISION
Vision House
19-22 Rathbone Place
London W1P 1DF
Tel: 636 7694
Contact: David Chapman
Recent Clients: Super Channel
Music Box
CIC Video
Virgin Vision

WORLDWIDE TELEVISION NEWS (WTN)
31-36 Foley Street
London W1P 7LB
Tel: 323 3255
Contact: Lorrie Grabham
Recent Clients: TV Asahi, Japan
Antenne 2, France
Channel 2, Iceland
Channel 9, Australia
SSR/SRG Geneva, Switzerland

625 LTD
15-16 Rathbone Place
London W1P 1DF
Tel: 636 6901
Contact: Sally Dixon

UK response to 1992

► continued from p43

ments, facing up to the new challenges of the market. John Rowland, MD, says the programme of growth takes in telecine and the activities of Cell Animation, the sister company which offers rostrum camera, motion control, Paintbox, Harry and Encore services. "We're also looking at moving into new fields through diversification or acquisition," says Rowland.

One area could well be the introduction of editing suites, as the company has concentrated to date on telecine, standards conversion and multi-format transfer work.

Of Europe, Rowland says: "We are very heavily involved in looking at its potential. We have a number of studies underway," but he is loathe to give away future plans. "All I can say is that I tend to think that we might have a presence in Europe rather than expecting Europeans to come over here."

He expects satellite communication of programme material to include facilities receiving and transmitting material, not simply as a money-making exercise, but as a method of taking work in from clients. He adds that diversification and a comprehensive service across the board is the key to the future, and with one eye on Carlton Television — which has investments in production, post-production and manufacturing — Rowland says, "I think we'll be looking to the lead they've given us."

Tele-Cine's facilities now include D1, Betacam SP in PAL and NTSC, Panasonic' M11 format which is slowly making its way in the market and the ADCA standards converter. Da Vinci colour correction in telecine and PCM audio will be supplemented by further purchases in the near future, says Rowland.

Chris Higgs of Visnews, says the organisation is hoping to open a 1 inch editing facility in its central London VisCentre location, to supplement the telecine operation already in place (using a Rank Cintel Mk.III and Da Vinci). Visnews facilities operate one successful suite in West London, relying mainly on conversion and re-editing jobs for distribution companies and broadcasters. But the new move, says Higgs, "is a big step for us in trying to break down the barriers and move into fully-fledged creative facilities beyond the bread and butter work."

The reliability and excellence of the new operation that makes Visnews a household name is a key selling point, though breaking into commercials and promos will require the development of an extra creative edge. Once again, it is Spain that Higgs chooses to identify as an important future market for Visnews and adds: "What I've found in Europe, is that they're quite a way behind the UK in terms of facilities, and we very much think there will be a lot of potential work for us, but quite how it will present itself I'm not sure. The television market as a whole is fragmenting and it is a question of being responsive."

Higgs and Annie Gordon of Trilion, have both recently been on tours of the American facility scene, and brought back similar impressions that facilities there tend to communicate with one another more freely than in the UK. With 1992 and the single European market around the corner, it would seem to be an appropriate time for the London-based houses to put their heads together and attempt to evaluate the real potential of Europe to provide business success. ■

VIDEO CASETTE SALES: UK

Week ending July 1988

1	Big Foot & The Hendersons	CIC
2	Masters of The Universe	Warner Home Video
3	No Way Out	RCA/ Columbia
4	Pick Up Artist	CBS/Fox
5	Surrender	Warner Home
6	Power	CBS/Fox
7	Private Investigations	Polygram
8	Born In East LA	CIC
9	They Still Call Me Bruce	Medusa
10	Rita, Sue & Box Too	Virgin
11	House Of Games	RCA/ Columbia
12	Eight Million Ways To Die	CBS/Fox
13	Hollywood Shuffle	Virgin Video
14	Tour Of Duty 2: Under Siege	EIV
15	Disorderlies	Warner Home Video
16	Big Shots	Guild Home Video
17	Innerspace	Warner Home Video
18	Dirty Dancing	Vestron Video
19	Supercarrier	Cineplex
20	Rent A Cop	Vestron Video

Source: Lighting Distribution

PHILIPPINES: TV

Week ending June 5, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Miss Universe '88 Replay	7	16.0
2	The Real Ghostbusters	2	14.0
3	Shaider	2	13.0
4	The $25,000 Pyramid	9	12.3
5	Mcgyver	9	12.1
6	Beauty and the Beast	7	11.8
7	Bioman	2	11.3
8	Great Disney Spectacular	2	10.4
9	Scarecrow and Mrs King	7	10.3
10	Twilight Zone	2	9.7
11	Tales of the Darkside	9	9.5
12	1 million chance	9	9.3
12	Captain Power	7	9.2
14	Miami Vice	7	9.2
14	TV Censored Bloopers	9	9.2
16	All Star Wrestling	13	9.1
17	Hitchhiker	9	8.9
18	Knots Landing	7	8.4
19	21 Jump St	7	8.3
19	Million Dollar Movies	2	8.3

Source. Pulsitron TV Ratings Service, AGB

UNITED STATES: TV

Week ending July 10, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Night Court	NBC	17.1
2	A Different World	NBC	17.0
3	Cheers	NBC	16.9
4	Bill Cosby Show	NBC	15.9
5	Golden Girls	NBC	15.8
5	LA Law	NBC	15.8
7	NBC Sunday Night Movie	NBC	15.5
8	60 Minutes	CBS	15.0
9	Murder, She Wrote	CBS	14.4
10	Hunter	NBC	14.0
11	Who's The Boss?	ABC	13.9
12	20/20	ABC	14.0
13	Amen	NBC	13.6
14	Perfect Strangers	ABC	12.8
15	Growing Pains	ABC	12.7
16	Matlock	NBC	12.4
17	CBS Tuesday Movie	CBS	12.3
17	227	NBC	12.3
19	Movie of the Week	NBC	12.2
20	Full House	ABC	11.5

Source: Nielsen National Index

CANADA: TV

Week ending June 1988

Rank	Programme (thousands)	Channel	Rating
1	Night Court	CTV	2,108
2	Cheers	CTV	2,007
3	Cosby Show	CTV	1,983
4	Jake and the Fat Man	CTV	1,882
5	Greystoke	CTV	1,817
6	CBC National News	CBC	1,758
7	CBC News	CBC	1,152
8	CBC Journal	CBC	1,516
9	Smothers Brothers	CBC	1,121
10	Fais-Moi un Dessin	TVA	1,038

Source: Nielsen National Index

UNITED KINGDOM: TV

Week ending July 3, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating (millions)
1	Eastenders (Thu/Sun)	BBC1	15.95
2	Eastenders (Tue/Sun)	BBC1	14.70
3	Neighbours Tue*	BBC1	14.20
4	Neighbours Fri*	BBC1	14.20
5	Neighbours Mon*	BBC1	13.30
6	Grandstand	BBC1	13.00
7	Neighbours Thu*	BBC1	12.85
7	Coronation Street	ITV	12.85
9	Neighbours Wed*	BBC1	12.70
10	That's Life	BBC1	12.25

** — Two showings on same day*
Source: Barb by AGB

AUSTRALIA: TV

June 1988

Rank	Programme (Thousands)	Channel	Ratings
1	The Cosby Show	9	1,875
2	Neighbours	10	1,828
3	A Country Practice	7	1,763
4	60 Minutes	9	1,677
5	Hey, Hey, It's Saturday	9	1,677
6	Who's The Boss	9	1,606
7	The Comedy Company	10	1,575
8	Beyond 2000	7	1,620
9	Family Ties	7	1,430
10	Growing Pains	9	1,406

Source: AGB Research Australia.

NEW ZEALAND: TV

Week ending July 2, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Ratings
1	The Flying Doctors	2	29
1	My Sister Sam	2	29
3	Dolly	2	27
4	Second Serve	2	26
5	A Question of Sport	1	25
5	American Graffiti	2	25
5	American Graffiti	2	25
5	Mask	2	25
5	Telethon	2	25
5	Family Ties	2	25
10	Cheers	2	24
10	The Cosby Show	2	24
12	Sons and Daughters	2	23
12	Coronation Street	1	23
12	LA Law	2	23
12	Alf	2	23
18	Paul Daniels Magic Show	1	22
18	Sons and Daughters	2	22
18	Hooperman	2	22

Source: AGB Research

FRANCE: TV

Week ending July 10, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating (Share)
1	Men prefer fat women (film)	A2	31
2	Brannigan (film)	A2	26
2	La boum 2 (film)	TF1	26
2	Jaws 3 (film)	TF1	26
2	Intervilles	TF1	26
6	Wheel of Fortune	TF1	24
6	Wheel of Fortune	TF1	24
6	Coup de Soleil	A2	19
9	Les maries de L'A2	A2	16
9	Jeux sans frontieres	A2	16

Source: Mediametrie

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INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

September 6-9	**Sydney, Australia**, *4th Pacific International Media Market (PIMM).*
September 21-25	**Montbeliard, France**, *4th International Video and TV Festival (Tel: 81 433467)*
September 23-27	**Brighton, UK,** *International Broadcasting Convention*
October 5-11	**Bristol, UK**, *Wildscreen International. (Festival Director: 272 292656)*
October 9-12	**Valencia, Spain.** *TV-Med'88. Mediterranean Television Festival. Tel: 332 1506 Telex: 63427*
October 16-21	**Montpellier, France**, *1st International Video Dance Grand Prix. (Tel: 72 5795)*
October 14-18	**Cannes, France,** *MIPCOM (Tel: 499 2317)*
October 17-23	**Plovdiv, Bulgaria**, *16th Edition of The Golden Chest International TV Festival.*
October 21-23	**Bracknell, UK.** *National Video Festival. The Media Centre, South Hill Park, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 4PA.*
November 7-13	**London Screenings.** *(Tel: London 228 7459)*
November 14-18	**Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria**. *The Golden Antenna. First International Festival of Entertainment television programmes.*
January 24-27	**Houston, US,** *NATPE*
February 13-18	**Monte Carlo, Monaco,** *International TV and Video Market*
April 21-26	**Cannes, France,** *MIP-TV*

While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, TV World cannot be held responsible for errors in this information.

Where are the children

▶ continued from p27

years, World Events has a Dinosaur called *Denver* who takes *his* friends back 75 million years. *Max* is only inches high and looks up to his friends. *Denver the Last Dinosaur* towers above the everything on his show.

World Events vp/general manager Brian Lacey has high-hopes for the big guy, anticipating that television exposure will pre-sell his home video release, which follows closely this fall. The series spins off a one-hour special that was rated #1 with Children 6-11 in an A C Nielsen report for the second quarter, during which *Denver* beat Disney's *Duck Tails*, topping all other animation in syndication and on the networks. He was understandably optimistic about the series, which debuts in the fall. It is now cleared in about 85 per cent of the country, including 38 of the top 40 stations and all the top 10.

During April and May the special was hyped by a promotional tie-in with Ralston Purina Company, which started national distribution of a fruit-flavoured cereal in five dinosaur shapes. Denver's likeness was featured on four million introductory cereal boxes and in-pack premiums, said Lacey, adding that World Events supplied stations with US$250 thousand in prizes, including bikes, books, encyclopedias and skateboards.

The sponsor-partner was pleased with the result and in fact on the day of *TV World's* interview with Lacey he had just firmed an agreement to do it again in the fall to launch the series. At that time Lacey plans to set a costume character tour for *Denver,* who will get lost in each of the top 20 markets. For three weeks at each location children will respond to the local station's clues. World Events will ship prizes directly to the winners. To make it easy for the stations, the company is providing a total turnkey operation for each of them. Before the memory of this three-week September promotion fades, the October home video release of the series will benefit from heightened awareness of *Denver*, who will have been sent to each market, expense free, for personal appearances.

Denver's domestic distribution rights are assigned to Fries Home Video, which will carry a premium offer on the cassette box. Fries is also selling World Events' *Saber Rider and the Star Sheriffs.* An earlier entry in the home video sweepstakes is *Voltron, Defender of the Universe* – a big moneymaker for World Events.

No one distributor has world rights, said the World Events executive, who prefers to select his overseas agents territory by territory. He noted that he now has firm deals for *Denver* in the UK, New Zealand, France, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Portugal, all South America and much of Asia. At press time he was about to close with Germany and the Scandanavian countries.

Lacey is also inches away from closing an international coproduction agreement with a French partner. "Initially it will be for animation," he said, but within 12 to 18 months we expect to develop live action properties." He is also negotiating with UK based companies who think the way he does.

In the UK *Denver* cassettes will probably retail for five pounds; domestically they are priced down to US$14.95 to comply with the competition and encourage sell-through. He believes that while the price will make the tapes affordable, the appeal remains in the programmes themselves.

"*Denver's* action episodes are non-violent, with positive social values and a leading character who has an inherent interest in children. The action doesn't depend on swords, lasers, castles, spaceships or violence. The heroes aren't super this or super that. Instead the story is filled with the warmth of friends." What a quaint idea. ■

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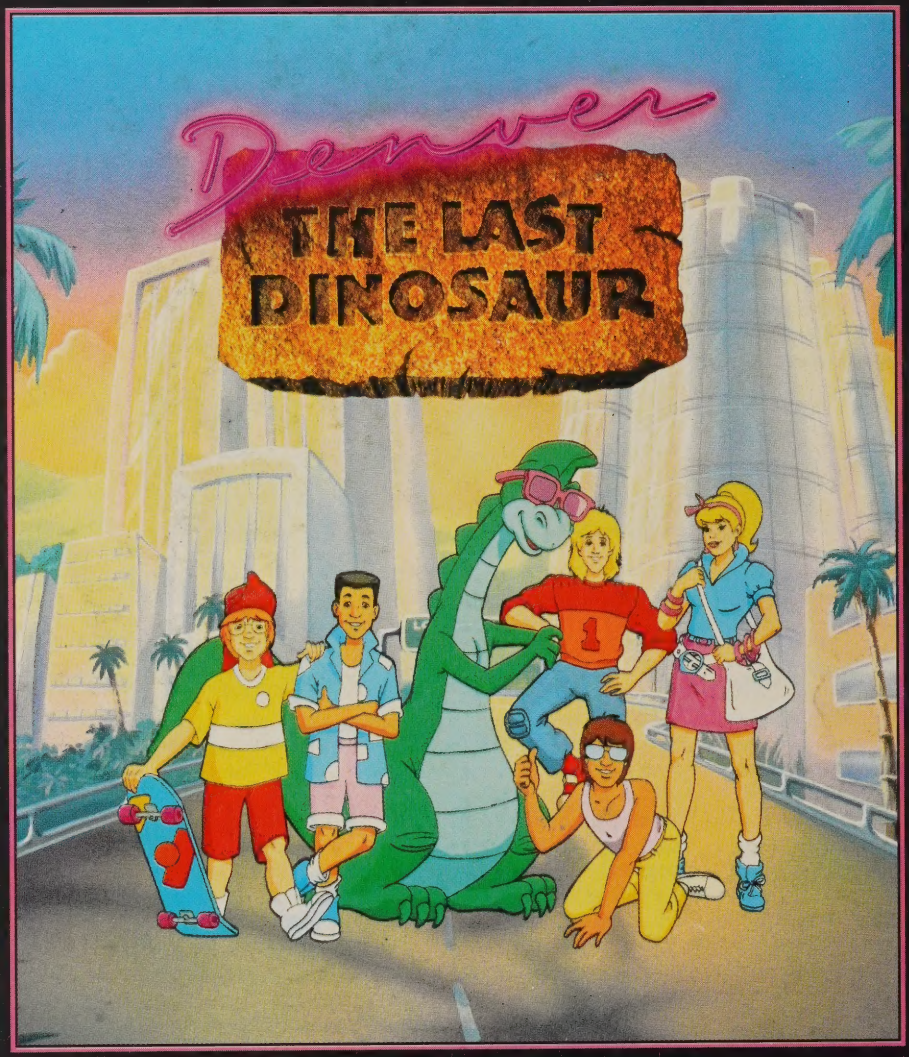

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